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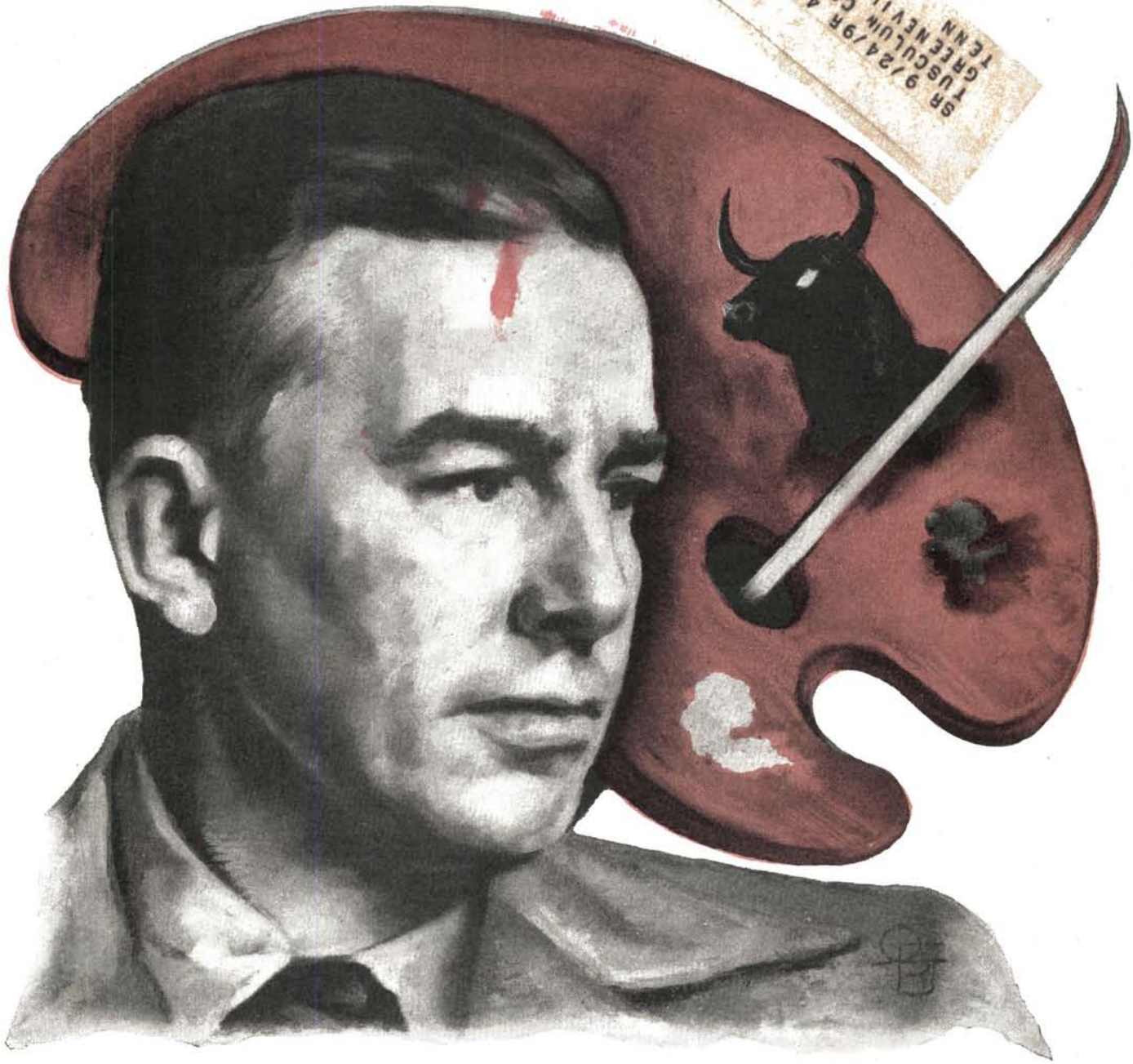

Tom Lea, author of "The Brave Bulls." (See page 10)

Problems of the Literary Craftsman

1. Book Reviewing

By HERSCHEL BRICKELL

2. Writing Historical Novels

By ESTHER FORBES

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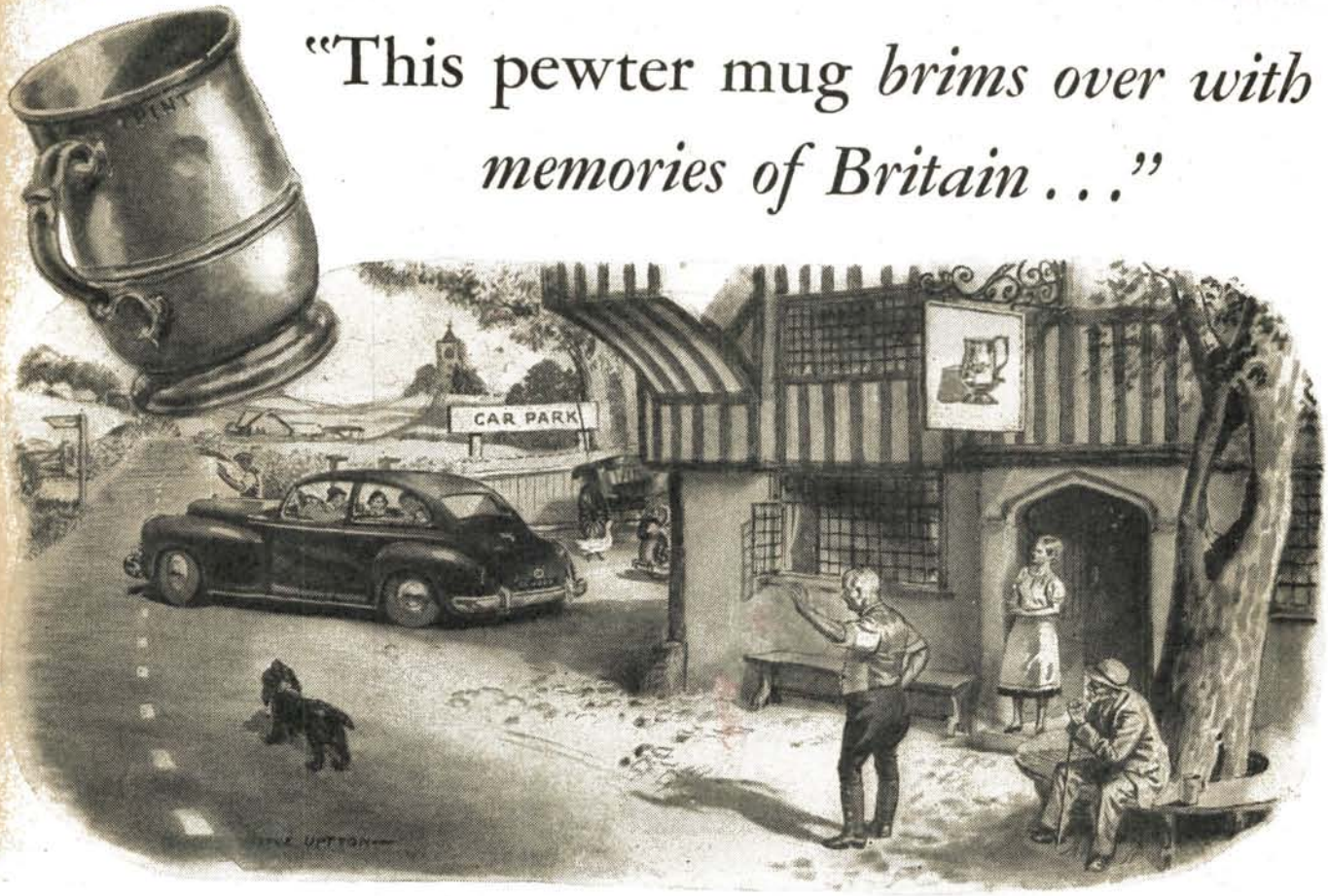
"This pewter mug *brims over with memories of Britain . . .*"



"We stayed outside London—but in easy reach—at an old-world country inn. That's where this pewter mug came from. My ale was never served in any other. '*Your* tankard', the landlord used to call it.

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April 23, 1949

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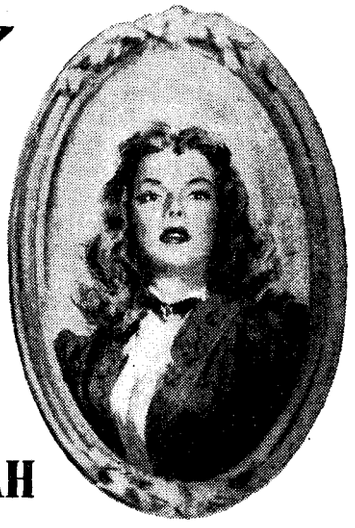
The Golden Fury

by MARIAN CASTLE

author of DEBORAH



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TRADE Winds

BABES IN THE HOLLYWOODS

SUCH HEARTRENDING stories of privation and suffering had percolated from behind the Silk Screen in Hollywood that when I wheeled into Sunset Boulevard, I fully expected to see top producers selling avocados on street corners and world-famous stars hocking their last Cadillac convertibles. The reports of distress in the film business, of course, had been ludicrously exaggerated. Some suspicious souls, in fact, believe that the exaggerations were deliberate—a Machiavellian ruse to force down top-heavy production costs and the demands of unions. Inspired or not, the country-at-large took the dirges seriously, concluded that new productions must be turkeys, and stayed away from the movies in such numbers that paid press agents were ordered frantically to reverse their field and start spouting optimism again.

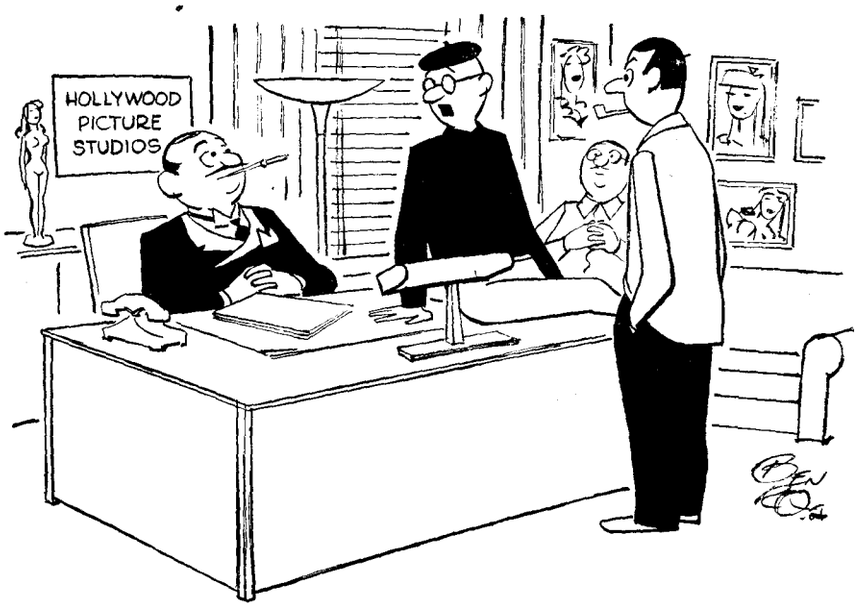
There is no doubt that the small fry in Hollywood have suffered. Fewer pictures have been made. Budgets have been slashed. The margin for error no longer exists. The days when any kind of junk made money are over. But the men who produce the consistently good pictures have little to worry about. Furthermore, they still are rewarded on a scale unequaled by any other industry in the country. Romanoff's and Chasen's continue to turn away customers. It's the cheeseburger stands and trailer courts that have felt the pinch. . . .

TWO NEW PICTURES that will help put a rosy glow back in the Hollywood skies are "The Window" and "The Barkleys of Broadway." The former is a taut, almost unbearably suspenseful story filmed on the New York East Side by RKO. It is what is known in the trade as a "sleeper"—a low-budget picture with no outstanding stars—but the superb performances of young Bobby Driscoll and his associates will give you an hour and a half of continuous thrills. "The Barkleys" is something else again—a typically opulent MGM musical, reuniting the incomparable Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. The latter's solo number in a shoe store (where the shoes hop down from the shelves to join in his capers) is the most brilliantly executed piece of trick photography I ever have seen. "The Barkleys of Broadway" made me—and everybody around me—feel a full ten years younger than when we entered the theatre! . . .

ONE THING HOLLYWOOD certainly hasn't lost is its sense of humor. At the newly decorated and impeccably managed Beverly Hills Hotel, Lionel Barrymore was asked by a rash reporter how he had enjoyed making a picture with little Margaret O'Brien. It was common knowledge that the fabulous moppet (*Time*'s phraseology) had stolen several scenes from under Mr. B.'s nose, despite all his know-how and experience. Barrymore regarded the reporter balefully and blurted, "Two hundred years ago they'd have burned her as a witch!" . . . Leo Guild insisted that during the Russian Revolution, a ton of highly taxed borscht had been dumped into the Volga, and that the incident was now referred to in Stalinist histories as the Borschton Tea Party . . . George Burns told the Friars, "It's a base falsehood that I never ate before Gracie Allen became my partner. I had nine previous partners—and I ate every one of them." . . . An independent producer wants to do a remake of Sean O'Casey's "The Plough and the Stars" under the new title suggested by Brooks Atkinson: "O'Casey at the Bat." . . . Ted Geisel reported that the imaginative keeper of the lion house at the Los Angeles zoo, observing that the mating season for the king of the jungle had come round, draped a curtain around his cage, and painted thereon, "The lion is busy." . . . And the town's leading dialectician pulled a couple of beauts. He warned a group of university professors, "Beware, gentlemen! That atom bomb is *dynamite*!" Of a temperamental underling he complained, "I can't make that fellow out. One day he's wonderful to work with. The next he goes around snarling, and won't cooperate with anybody. He's a regular Jack and Jill!" . . .

THE BOOKSELLERS I MANAGED to see in a single day were uniformly cheerful. With James Relentless Russell as my cicerone, we pulled Bob Campbell out of bed in Westwood at the crack of dawn, threw a dazzling hand-painted tie depicting the wonders of Yosemite around his neck, and dragged him and his bride, Blanche, off to breakfast. His manager, Herbert Meyers, was still in a daze from the customer who had demanded, "Where do you keep your portraits of movie stars? My friend told me I could get Mona Lisa here." . . . Around the corner, Wilbur and John Phillips, who once provided formidable competition for the Harvard Co-op in Cambridge, have opened a fine new college text-book business, managed by Don Farley, the pride of Nebraska. . . . Jim Hakes's Westwood Bookshop is thriving, and his spritely aide, Margaret Winkler, makes a pretty penny baby-sitting on the side. The one she was dandling when I was there claimed to be a freshman at UCLA. . . .

Marian Hunter, Rachel Brand at Martindale's, and a new Brentano branch divide the cream of the patronage in Beverly Hills. They report



"Well, suppose we give them a real gay, cheerful story and then surprise them with a sad ending!"

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that business is holding up better than collections. A handsome customer of Rachel's turned out to be Rod La Rocque, who recalled a telphone argument he and his wife, Vilma Banky, had had with Sam Goldwyn. Mr. G. ended by exclaiming, "Come over to the studio and talk it over. If I'm wrong, in fifteen minutes you'll agree with me." . . . On Hollywood Boulevard, Lou Epstein's Pickwick Bookshop has inherited the unique position once occupied by the mercurial Stanley Rose. Epstein is assisted by a high-powered staff that includes Ed Stackhouse, Bob Wetterau, and Bill Morehouse. . . .

In Los Angeles proper, Pearl Goldwater remains queen of all she surveys at Bullock's. She looked so lovely at luncheon that two bench-warmers in the Biltmore lobby woke up long enough to ask for her autograph. At Robinson's, Ralph Erickson was clearing the decks for a party in honor of Audie Murphy and his bride, Wanda Hendrix. Murphy's "To Hell and Back" is climbing steadily on the best-seller lists (audited and unaudited). Fred Fillingham at the May Company is doing a land-office business in his ingeniously designed new cook-book section; he says there is a great demand for an inexpensive and simply written compendium of Chinese recipes. Muriel Gates and Lois Montgomery now preside over the book department at the Broadway; Grace Thompson has moved over to stationery. She proudly displayed a number of brand-new gadgets she had assembled. "Who buys knick-knacks like that?" I scoffed, and then answered the question by ordering four of them myself. . . .

BOB LEAVITT, DIRECTOR OF Hearst Promotion Enterprises, on a visit with his wonderful and talented wife, Ethel Merman, told of an odd assignment

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when he was serving as a colonel in World War II. He was aide to a general in the New York area when a messenger arrived direct from the Secretary of State: a Russian general and a Russian admiral, on their way up from Washington, were to be entertained royally, and hang the trouble or expense. "The admiral is a simple case," read the confidential communiqué. "He's a jolly fellow and seems to like almost anything. The general, however, is tough. We've tried everything on him, but he just won't give. He glares straight ahead, and keeps his mouth closed tighter than an Indian chief at a war powwow. It's very important that we send these two babies home in a happy frame of mind. You've always been more or less connected with the entertainment racket, Colonel Leavitt, and we're depending on you to solve this problem for us. P. S. : neither the general nor the admiral speaks a word of English."

Leavitt remembered an old vaudeville comedian who spoke excellent Russian, and who knew more smoking-room stories than the editor of "Anecdota Americana." He corralled this invaluable character, introduced him to the Soviet officers, and headed for a yacht whose skipper had been instructed to circle Manhattan Island very slowly. ("This was routine procedure with foreign VIPs," explained Leavitt. "They saw a lot of interesting sights—and besides it took up the whole afternoon.")

The yacht had no sooner cast off its moorings, than the comedian swung into action. His stories were tried and true, and the admiral reacted perfectly, slapping his thigh, and roaring with delight. The general's expression, however, remained immovable. His lips tightly compressed, he stared coldly and disconcertingly at the jokester. "Poker Face is too much for me," whispered the latter miserably to Leavitt. "I give up." "Make one last effort," pleaded Leavitt. "I don't dare tell the Old Man we've failed him. Can't you think of a story that *never misses*?"

"From the depths of his memory," concluded Leavitt, "that great old trouper dredged a real honey. I knew it by the admiral's reaction. He almost fell off his chair laughing. But it was on the general that my attention was riveted. He fought to the bitter end. The story proved too much for him. He suddenly threw back his head, opened his mouth a mile wide, and laughed until the tears rolled down his cheeks. And that's when we discovered why the general never had opened his mouth before. Every single tooth in his head was solid gold."

—BENNETT CERF.

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The Saturday Review of Literature

Problems of the Literary Craftsman

1. Book Reviewing

By Herschel Brickell

Herschel Brickell

BOOK reviewing, as the phrase is currently used and understood, differs from literary criticism mainly in that it takes the short view. Someone has said that the good book reviewer should be "secretary to the public," in other words the public's five senses applied to the written and printed word.

It is, therefore, the primary function of the book reviewer, as I understand it, to report as accurately as he can, no matter what his medium, whether it be the daily newspaper or the esoteric quarterly, upon the book in hand and to relate it, at the same time, to the contemporary frame of both art and life.

If you are going to undertake book reviewing, it is imperative that you keep in mind at all times the publication for which you are writing. Every editor has in his mind the perfect review, even if he could not define it to save his life, but you can make shrewd guesses by watching what he prints. In other words, study your medium, as you would with the article, the poem, the serial, or the short story. The editor thinks he knows what he wants, even if, in the words of another well-known editor, he does not know what it is, and he also thinks he knows what his readers want, which is what he gets paid for.

So no matter what kind of review you are going to do, have its arrangement conform to the style of the newspaper or magazine for which it is intended, thereby earning the undying gratitude of the editor and his staff. The fundamentals of book reviewing do not change at all, but forms do, and it is your business to watch both, not merely the former, nor merely the latter.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The authors of the accompanying essays know whereof they write. Herschel Brickell was for twelve years the daily book reviewer of the* New York Post. *Esther Forbes is the author of such memorable historical novels as "O Genteel Lady!," "A Mirror for Witches," and last season's "Running of the Tide." These articles will appear in "Writers on Writing," a volume edited by Mr. Brickell to be published on May 5 by Doubleday.*

Good book reviewing may very well lead into literary criticism and, in fact, most of the present-day critics, such as Edmund Wilson, Alfred Kazin, Henry Seidel Canby, and many others, are also practising reviewers. Obviously, the man or woman who does intelligent reviews of a half dozen novels by William Faulkner is then in a position to discuss Mr. Faulkner against the background of American literature, provided, of course, the reviewer knows the background himself.

Most book reviewing in the United States of America at this moment is honest and not very competent. It is honest because we are, in general, blessed with an honest press, but the trouble is that few newspapers or magazines feel they can afford to pay very much, if anything, for book reviewing, and this explains the generally low level of competence.

The reason book reviewing does not pay any better is that books do not sell nearly so well as many other products, which means relatively small advertising revenues from publishers even in good times. Then, too, not many of our people care about books or book reviews, so with the exception of the literary journals, appealing to a special class of readers, nobody worries very much over the low standards of reviewing, except writers, publishers, and other directly interested parties.

It should be made clear at once that anyone reading this discussion who hopes to make a living from book reviewing had better stop here. The chances are, to put it mildly, infinites-

(*Continued on page* 26)

2. Historical Novels

By Esther Forbes

Esther Forbes

ALTHOUGH there can be argument about how the "historical novel" should be defined, there cannot be any, I hardly think, about the simple fact that it is primarily a novel. If its scene is laid in the past I am classing it as an historical novel. "Buddenbrooks" covers long stretches of time before Thomas Mann's birth. If ever he knew Tony Buddenbrooks it was as an old, old woman—never the foolish young Tony of the novel. He was thus about as far removed from the time of which he wrote as our contemporary novelists who choose the Civil War for background. Margaret Mitchell or Ben Ames Williams have known old men who fought in our Civil War, even as Mann might have known an elderly Tony. No one will argue but that "Gone with the Wind" or "House Divided" are much more typical historical novels. Yet few will fail to agree that Mann's novel is the greater. It is a greater historical novel because it is a greater novel. The same is true of such giants as "War and Peace," "Vanity Fair," "Kristin Lavransdatter." Here again the essential truth of the human being is greater than any historical trappings. The story of Kristin and Erlend would be one of the truest stories of marriage even if the scene had been laid, not in medieval Norway, but in West Newton, Mass. Prince Andrey, Count Pierre, Becky Sharp are as genuine people as ever lived in a book or elsewhere. All good novels are a reflection of and a reflection on life. At their best, a search for truth. Nor is truth necessarily realism, although it often is.

One of the strangest of historical novels and one of the greatest which this country has produced is "The Scarlet Letter." Hawthorne, however,

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did not create well-rounded characters. The four people—and there are only four—are more symbols of life than life itself. They play their tragedy on a stripped, sparse stage, bathed in a light that never was on land or sea. Hawthorne calls this stage "Boston," although there is little resemblance between this city of the soul, the conscience, sin, and redemption, and the actual seventeenth-century town. At a time like the present when historical novelists are so set upon having every artifact exactly right—for the critics will get them if they don't—it is pleasant to contemplate Hawthorne's serene disregard of them. Seemingly he needed neither much history nor very convincing characters to write a novel that is both true and great.

THREE years before "The Scarlet Letter" came out in 1850 "Wuthering Heights" was published in London. Emily Brontë felt freer in telling her dark story of super-human passions in a period not her own. On page one she carefully gives us a date, 1801, but by 1801 the story of Heathcliff and the first Cathy is long past. Except for this date there is no internal evidence as to when things happened except that Heathcliff's long absence is accounted for by his fighting in America. It is curious to try to imagine such a wild man of the moors buttoned up in a scarlet uniform, getting shot at at Lexington, keeping disciplined ranks at Bunker Hill, surrendering at Yorktown. And how did he get so rich over here? As far as I know, he was the only British soldier fighting in the Revolution who did. I doubt if Emily Brontë ever tried to imagine all this. Like Hawthorne she focused her mind on the most enduring of human things. She pushed her novel back into the past to free herself of the present. How far back she pushed it she hardly knew or cared. She did no research—but who would dare to say that her book would be better if she had?

I believe that Hawthorne, too, pondered upon and dreamed of the seventeenth century more than he studied it. Of that large majority of Puritans who were healthy extroverts, who built all those stone walls, killed Indians, married three times and had twenty children, who were primarily rather earthy, hard-drinking Elizabethans, he has little to say. Such did not interest the marble faun—so why should he?

Tolstoy, greatest of historical novelists as he is of novelists, was, according to his biographer Ernest J. Simmons, no profound student of the Napoleonic Era. "The amount of historical research that he did for 'War and Peace'," says Simmons, "has often been exaggerated. He made no attempt to exhaust such material, for he read only up to the point when it came clear to him what use he wished to make of his sources."

The amount of research necessary seems a most personal problem. Good and bad books have been done with little. Good and bad books with much. Certain novelists like Sigrid Undset or Lion Feuchtwanger are genuine scholars and equally gifted as novelists. Neither produces books that sound as though they had been written from card indexes, or as if a Ph.D. would have been a proper goal for their scholarship. The fact is that there is no rule for writing a good novel, historical or otherwise. Some authors sail upon one tack, some upon another, to reach the happy haven of supremacy. And man has little to sail by except his own old-fashioned inner light.

Probably the first fiction told to wondering cavemen was stories of the past. The oldest tales we have were doubtless historical novels to their first audiences—that battle before Troy, the flight of Israel's hosts from Egypt, even the little fairy tale with its traditional beginning, "A long time ago . . ." Man has always longed to look back and see the giants which were in those days. Helen's unfortunate affair with Paris may have been mere gossip and scandal to her contemporaries. It took the alchemy of time for her to emerge as a great legendary symbol of all beauty, for which men have launched their ships, died upon ringing plains beside the purple sea. To Pharaoh, Moses was perhaps merely a labor agitator. Surely never the God-stricken man leading all minorities into their promised lands.

The reader is more ready to accept God-stricken men, symbolic beauty, improbabilities, impossibilities, if he is told they existed far away and long ago. His own world lacks them, but then, his world is often dull, frustrating, or sourly funny. This gullibility of the reader concerning the past may work out for better or for worse. Without it there would be no Helens, no Heathcliffs. Not even a Minnehaha. There would be no Robin Hoods, no Siegfrieds, and half of the characters in historical novels appearing today would be too unbelievable to hold the reader for three pages. Suppose, today, you pick up a novel about Henry Morgan or Captain Kidd. You can be fairly confident that on their ships the cabin boy will be the hero's sweetheart in disguise, or that a Spanish beauty will be captured thirty pages out. But if you ship on that uncompromisingly contemporary good ship *USS Reluctant* the girls may be as far removed as are the nurses in Thomas Heggens's "Mr. Roberts"—in fact as they often are in life. This willingness to believe almost anything if the time is far enough back has often cheapened and falsified fiction. But it should not be forgotten that much of the greatest of fiction has been laid in a distant time. I doubt if even Shakespeare could have handled Hamlet as well if the court of which he wrote had been Queen Elizabeth's Hampton Court instead of Elsinore. Could Tolstoy have written "War and Peace" about his contemporaries? I doubt it.

THE last great orgy of historical novel writing and reading was in the early part of this century. Novels written then were largely descended from Scott, Dumas, and perhaps most of all from Stevenson. Unlike their honorable ancestors they are almost unreadable today. The inevitability of pattern, the paucity of imagination, almost killed off that particular type of romantic adventure story, "cloak and sword." By the Twenties it almost disappeared under a flood of flappers, sad young men, and flaming youths, which in turn—as novel trends so often do—also turned toward pattern. Yet even as the historical novel seemed almost gone for good there was appearing in America some extremely interesting historical fiction of a different sort. I am referring to the best of Joseph Hergesheimer, like "Three Black Pennies," such beautiful books of Willa Cather's as "Death Comes for the Archbishop" or "A Lost Lady," Thornton Wilder's "Bridge of San Luis Rey," Edith Wharton's stories of old New York, Stephen Vincent Benét's short stories, and Elizabeth Madox Roberts's "The Great Meadow." Perhaps this is the choicest group of historical fiction this country has produced. All these books are beautifully written. All are brief. Some are open to the criticism of thinness, a lack of that "gusto" publishers are now always referring to on their jackets. They may seem a trifle too self-consciously literary. But as the historical novel of the Forties

"Looks Like He Was Safe"

By Franklin P. Adams

NO more to ballgames do I go;
I'm rabid for the radio,
And listen to each ball and strike,
And to the broadcast boys employing
"like"
Like they believed they had a mission
To use "like" like a preposition.

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tends to such fantastic length it is well to ponder upon the brevity of this earlier group, and upon its delicate artistry so often lacking in similar writing of today.

ANOTHER type of historical novel emerging in the Twenties, but mostly on the continent of Europe, was usually long, usually very scholarly, at its best hard to equal. "Kristin Lavransdatter," by Sigrid Undset, is, to me, the best of this type, although Feuchtwanger is very, very good, and there are others. Feuchtwanger at this time was tempted to generalize. He wished to point out the difference between the books he wrote and the good old cloak-and-sword novel of the turn of the century. The earlier novel, he believed, sprang "from delight in gaily-colored storytelling and in decoration." "Ben Hur" and "Quo Vadis?" he gives as examples, omitting the great avalanche of lesser books that followed them. After World War I "it was the pragmatical that was sought in the historical novel . . . it strengthened in the reader the illusion of reality and imparted to him a conviction of documentary evidence and reliability. The Russian novels of D. Merezhkovski form a connecting link between the earlier kind of historical novel and the modern one. The author of this new historical novel does not lay stress upon the color of the period, but its substance. He does not seek to emphasize the romantic. He does not underline those qualities which mark the distance between those times and our own, but, preserving historical reality, he underlines the very qualities which are common to our own time. In this way he traces unchanging man through the ever-changing periods of history." As examples, Feuchtwanger mentions his own "Jew Süss" and "The Ugly Duchess."

Writing in the Twenties, Feuchtwanger believed that the book-buying public was so adult compared to that earlier generation of historical-novel readers that they were weaned away from "gaily colored storytelling" and romantic decorations. It would be the search for unchanging man in a changing world, documentary evidence, reliability, that would henceforth be the noble aims of the historical novelists. Nor was he entirely wrong. Others besides himself have had these aims. Surely, however, he was partly wrong.

When, in the Thirties, the historical novel returned to popularity in a big way romantic decoration and gaily-colored storytelling were large ingredients in it, and they have been ever since. Hervey Allen's "Anthony Adverse," in 1933, showed the trend. Three years later Margaret Mitchell's "Gone with the Wind" confirmed it. Nor should it be forgotten that by then the Depression was upon us. It seemed that there was one book which America, insecure and frightened, wanted to read. Henry C. Link says, "Scarlett, though in many ways not an admirable person, was a woman who remained forever the master of her world rather than its victim. . . . Here was a woman who, to millions suffering the comparative luxuries of a depression today, exemplified a personal triumph over social insecurity." This certainly was one reason for the book's popularity. Another was the gaily-colored storytelling and decoration which Feuchtwanger thought we had outgrown, and surely a third was the actuality of its *dramatis personae*. Although Miss Mitchell did not probe deeply into the wounds of the human soul, so far as she did go she was absolutely credible. All her readers had known a girl something like Scarlett. If we had never exactly known a Rhett Butler we certainly had dreamed of him. How very thin, very pallid the characters of "Ben Hur" seem in contrast.

There is another reason why the historical novel began to burgeon during the days of depression. As J. Donald Adams has pointed out, the novel of the contemporary scene was showing almost an excess of "subjective content. Readers had grown tired of being dragged through the tortuous mazes of the novelist's unconscious self . . . fed up with the atmosphere of frustration and defeat . . ." It is true that most historical novels then and since have shown an affirmative attitude toward life. In such books as those by Kenneth Roberts, Walter Edmonds, or in such novels as LeGrand Cannon's "Look to the Mountain" and A. B. Guthrie's "The Big Sky," we meet our own ancestors in times of stress as great as any we have known laying out the wilderness towns, getting scalped by Indians, meeting what misadventure may come with very little whimpering, self-pity, or help from psychiatrists. If they have neuroses they get hanged as witches or go West and become mountain men. It is as simple as that. Yes, simpler than life.

America, during the Depression, became for the first time very curious about her own past. Surely a healthy interest. It was then the word "Americana" moved from the library shelf to the cocktail lounge. Series about American rivers, towns, mountains, began to come out. Biographies of America's heroes and villains jumped to best-sellerdom. There were books on American customs, architecture, primitive painting, and the novels concerned with America's history and folkways rode the tide. Some of these were good, both as history and as novels. Some bad history, not-so-bad novels. A surprising number were pretty good history but absolutely stagnant as novels. "Fictionized" biography began driving book stores frantic. On which counter should it be displayed? No one yet seems to know, although this form of writing, instead of being a brand-new monster, is as old as Parson Weems. As old as Plutarch.

I HAVE tried to indicate in just a short space how various the historical novel may be—in fact, must be, to keep its freshness and honesty. Yet today, as in the earlier part of this century, it is in danger of becoming stereotyped. A pattern is forming over it and a pattern is as stultifying to any form of art as the dreaded disease is to the individual, which turns living flesh to stone. For what is a novel but one individual's report upon life, be it life lived in ancient Sparta or modern Manhattan?

I believe with J. Donald Adams that

> the least important thing about a creative writer's work is his choice of material; what matters is the degree of truth, of art, and of illumination which he can bring to it. The basic problems of life are repetitive and eternal; they are the individual's relation to himself, to his fellows, and to God. They were essentially the same when slaves toiled to build the Pyramids, or when the tumbrils clattered through the streets of Paris, as they are today in a Pittsburgh steel mill or a New York night club.

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Fiction. *The novels that dominate this week's reviews have, like most modern fiction, more than a simple or dramatic story to tell. Behind the Mexican bullfighter and his associates in Tom Lea's "The Brave Bulls" are the passions that beset the human race and man's eternal struggle against fear. Louis Bromfield calls this work by a new American writer very close to perfection. In Pearl S. Buck's "Kinfolk" there is the conflict between American and Chinese philosophies and ways of life motivating her story. James Branch Cabell's "The Devil's Own Dear Son," the last of a trilogy, wanders from modern America into the familiar lands of Cabellian fantasy. The fine translation of an old French novel, "Jean Barois," can be recommended as a brilliant study of the effects on French society and thought of the famous Dreyfus Case.*

Triumph in the Arena

THE BRAVE BULLS. By Tom Lea. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1949. 270 pp. $3.

Reviewed by LOUIS BROMFIELD

THIS is a beautiful book. It is a distinguished book. Quite possibly it is a great book. Certainly it could be read at any time in history by readers of any nationality or cultural background and lose none of its depth, validity, or universal appeal and timelessness; and that is one of the profound tests of a great book. Primarily it is about a Mexican bullfighter; fundamentally it is concerned with man and his struggles. It is certainly a book which will hearten the great number of readers and reviewers and editors who have been distressed at the low estate of American novel-writing during the past few years.

The story is comparatively simple and concerns Luis Bello, a bullfighter, and his struggle against fear. Surrounding him are a variety of characters created with great skill, warmth, and reality—the mistress whom he acquires in a surging fit of overwhelming passion, his manager, his bullfighting younger brother and his zoot-suit following, a parasitic family, the manager of the bull ring, and the battered, heroic figure of the old man who raises at the great ranch of Las Astas the finest, fiercest fighting bulls in Mexico. Like all great novels it is not simply a story of several characters but the story very largely of the human race itself, and more directly the story of mankind's fight against fear, a struggle which at this moment in the history of the world is one of the greatest significance.

It is always difficult to analyze a book which rouses great enthusiasm in the heart of the reviewer, for one is inclined to overlook its faults altogether. In this case I have tried diligently to find faults but have been unsuccessful. As a work of art, in conception, form, and execution, "The Brave Bulls" is very close to perfection. The writing has a clear, spare quality like the strange light that hangs over the Spanish and sometimes the lean, bare landscape of Mexico. There are no extra words, no overwriting, and yet the effect of the book is one of great color in primary values and of great richness. Part of this is achieved, I think, by invocation, and in some respects the success of the book depends upon how much of beauty, of knowledge, or cultivation there exists waiting to be invoked in the reader. The author is a painter and a very good one and he has carried over into his writing the eye of the painter so that every scene exists clearly in the mind and the eye of the reader. One can see and feel the sunlight, smell the dust and blood and sour wine. The book has another quality of great books—that within two or three pages it creates a world in which the reader can lose himself completely and which has for him as much reality as the world about him, or perhaps more reality, for, like all good novels, "The Brave Bulls" raises life onto a different plane in which the daily pattern of living takes form and has significance. That, too, is the test of a great book—that it illuminates for us the things we ourselves do not have the power to see and understand or fit into a coherent pattern of significance.

—Drawing from the book by the author.

It is a heartening book not only because of the qualities recorded above, but because much of its success and beauty lies in its form. One could almost say that it marks the return of form to the American novel, that form without which any attempt at art becomes meaningless confusion. The book begins in a bare, sunbaked, flag-bedecked arena and returns there in the end, having explored in the intervening pages all the characters and situations which have to do with Luis Bello and his triumph over fear. In the last chapter it rises to a kind of white heat which sets the blood to tingling and in a curious fashion restores faith in the courage of man and those indestructible and indefatigable qualities which have made it possible for him to survive and conquer plagues, wars, and his own weaknesses back through history.

It is not the first time that an American writer has turned to foreign scenes and foreign characters for a depth and strength and an almost primeval quality which is difficult to find in our own American life and background. It is difficult, for example, to find in this country characters who love to the death, who think and feel simply but deeply, and who live in direct contact with the primary forces of nature. We are too materially comfortable, too happy as extroverts, too superficial in our approach to human relations. Too many of us look upon plumbing and automobiles as civilization. Too many of us divorce and remarry over and over again, not to count all the superficial dallying along the way. If you tried to find a character like Luis Bello in the United States, it would be very nearly impossible, and if you attempted to write about him, you would not be believed. It is, I think, curiously significant that perhaps the three best novels coming out of the war, "A Bell for Adano," "The Gallery," and "Tales of the South Pacific," all concerned themselves very largely with foreign characters and backgrounds and from these much of their richness and humanity was derived. It is just possible that one thing wrong with American writing

(*Continued on page 12*)

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—*From the end papers of "The Brave Bulls."*

A Tribute to Tom Lea

KNOWING Tom Lea has proved to me that genius is not being born with a gift for painting or for writing; the inborn factor is a great desire to do a good job. The artist may be born with a steady hand and a clear eye but the characteristic that gets the job done is integrity. No compromise with half-way methods. No sloppy work to be excused by "spontaneous" inspirations. Work is the answer. Hard work. Know-how comes from hard work, intense and vigorous.

When Tom was learning about the bulls, I waited two hours in a cold wind while he talked low Spanish to the peon truck driver who delivered the bulls to the Plaza de Toros. This peon had ideas which might be deeper than those of the hacendado who was supposed to know all about the bulls. Tom's eyes sparkled with enthusiasm as he interviewed this unexpected aficionado. Here was a new angle—more know-how—the inside dope. No bits of knowledge are too small. No compromise with half facts. He had to know everything, regardless of the hours or energy it took.

When Tom painted pots for the Laboratory of Anthropology at Sante Fe in 1933, he said it was just to pay the grocery bill but I'll bet he was enthusiastic at the time. You can't be around Tom Lea without being enthusiastic. The job to be done or the conversation to be carried on is vital. I guess that's why he makes such a good old-fashioned.

Tom Lea has known death three times in his own family circle and many times in the South Pacific. Perhaps that is why he understands so well the inner thoughts of the matadors and the bulls. One is going to die, the way he does it is important.

* * *

Tom Lea was born July 11, 1907, in El Paso, Texas, and went through school in this border town, speaking Spanish, hunting and riding with cowboys. He studied at the Chicago Art Institute (1924-26) and there became a protégé of John Norton, mural painter. Tom has many murals to his credit. This work developed his ideals of perfection and accuracy; a mural may stand a hundred years and ultimately be the only record of the details shown.

Tom's first bid for fame was influenced by J. Frank Dobie. Frank often came to El Paso, and talked with Tom's father, a pioneer lawyer, who had a fund of yarns about the frontier town of El Paso. Frank was so impressed with Tom's drawings that he asked his publishers to have Tom illustrate his "Apache Gold and Yaqui Silver." Tom made all these drawings on ruled paper because he didn't want the publishers to think they were finished. He wanted to perfect them after the ideas were approved. I kidded him that his double work probably cut his pay to 25¢ an hour but two weeks after the book was published, *The Saturday Evening Post* sent him a fat envelope containing a story which they asked him to illustrate.

This work led to a contract with *Life* magazine as a war artist. On December 7, 1941, he was assigned to the North Atlantic Patrol. His war work is well known. A hundred pictures were used by *Life*, most of them in color. He was with the Navy at Guadalcanal, the Marines at Peleliu, the Air Force in Assam, the Army in England and Africa; he was in or flew over every major front except Germany. At war's end he decided to do a series of pictures on the history of beef cattle, but in research he ran into the high breed—fighting bulls. He was diverted to a new field. The color, traditions, tragedy attracted him so that he spent two years of hard work studying and learning the bulls.

Tom was always a good letter-writer but while he was working for *Life*, he had to make written reports on his war experiences. He even had to write copy to fit under the pictures. He was well qualified for this exacting work, and his ability was recognized. Two small book editions of his war stories were published and his success with writing developed confidence. His interse feeling for the bulls created an idea that just had to be written. "The Brave Bulls" is the product of thirty years of experience in developing style and understanding, two years of concentrated research and hard work.

If you are an average citizen who visualizes an artist as a long-hair with a windsor tie, you will be surprised when you meet this stocky, aggressive, regular guy with the close-cropped hair. He lives with his wife and son on a modest street in his old home town which is anything but "arty." His only eccentricities are wearing Marine dungarees while he paints or writes, and standing up to an elevated typewriter—a mural painter never learns how to sit down to work, even when he becomes an author.

—CARL HERTZOG.

Tom Lea, as illustrator, and Carl Hertzog, as designer and typographer, have collaborated in El Paso on numerous bibliophilic treasures, among them last summer's masterful "Twelve Travelers." Although Mr. Herzog has also done limited editions of contemporary verse and historical reprints for E. De Golyer's and Elizabeth Ann McMurray's Peripatetic Press, his forte is Southwestiana, vide "The Journey of Three Englishmen."

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(Continued from page 10)

today is that the picking is lean and anemic and not the stuff of which great tragedy or romance is made.

It may also be significant that the best plays, like "Death of a Salesman" and "A Streetcar Named Desire," are largely concerned with this thin-picking on the American scene. Both are tragedies, not of people or of great passions, but of a kind of life from which the principal characters depart, one into a madhouse and the other by suicide, without ever having experienced a single profound passion or emotion.

You will certainly find nothing anemic about "The Brave Bulls." On the contrary, it celebrates both tragedy and heroism and leaves you with a feeling of pride rather than disgust at being a member of this so-called human race; and believe me, it is no Pollyanna story.

The publishers should be congratulated on the handsome appearance of the book itself which is decorated, I should guess, by the drawings of the author himself. It is apparently Mr. Lea's first book and he is, fortunately for us, likely to produce others, for it is neither an autobiographical novel nor an eight-hundred-page contraption designed to incorporate everything that has been successful on the market from Gertrude Stein to Kathleen Winsor. Mr. Lea knows where he is going, observes everything along the way, and arrives in a flash of glory at the end. In "The Brave Bulls" he has revealed better than any other writer in our time the peculiar bleak glory and beauty not only of the bull ring but of Spanish culture as well.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 304

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 304 will be found in the next issue.

PC GPF HFOACLM X

DCOCANZ FO XOB FOC

RFKCM PNQ DCZZCL ZPXO

PC NM DCRFKCE.

XLNMZFZRC

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 303

What a man does, not what he feels, thinks, or believes, is the universal yardstick of behavior.

—B. C. LEEMING.

Restoration in St. Augustine

THE DEVIL'S OWN DEAR SON. By James Branch Cabell. New York: Farrar, Straus & Co. 1949. 209 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by MILTON CRANE

WITH due solemnity—and a not perhaps entirely histrionic show of surprise—James Branch Cabell now presents us with his fiftieth book, and the last member of his most recent trilogy. He has laid down these latest volumes, the products of the past three or four years, in the ancient town of St. Augustine, Florida; and in his foreword to "The Devil's Own Dear Son" he describes the circumstances of his discovery of St. Augustine and explains something of the attachment he feels for it. It is difficult to distinguish between the literary and the personal pleasure which Mr. Cabell takes in St. Augustine, a town which for almost Proustian delicacy and complexity of social discrimination makes his beloved Richmond seem the rawest of frontier towns. There Mr. Cabell has fortunately found something which an earlier visitor, Ponce de León, sought in vain, and the present volume is a tribute to St. Augustine's restorative powers. An entire trilogy, for that matter, is small enough compensation for recovery from three bouts of pneumonia.

"The Devil's Own Dear Son" is, in its author's mind, a milestone, and it looks back, indeed, with a certain fondness over a long vista of novels. The hero, Diego de Arredondo Dodd, finds himself in the course of his journey traversing the lost lands of Poictesme, Rorn, and Ecben, as well as the forest of Branlon; here Mr. Cabell is obviously indulging a mild nostalgia for the long saga of Manuel and the shorter but wordier saga of Smirt-Smith-Smire. But there is another sense in which this novel reviews the past. As one reads the ironic history of Diego, the devil's own dear son, one constantly experiences the sensation of having been here before.

Diego, the proprietor of the Bide-A-While Tourist Home in St. Augustine, decides, at the age of forty-one, to marry his old sweetheart; she has already married and divorced the demiurgic Mr. Smith of the forest of Branlon, and Diego, for his part, has enjoyed a fairly colorful youth and maturity, having by actual count murdered three men, forged two checks, and seduced five virgins, nine widows, and fourteen married women. While he is discussing with his father the purchase of an oil heater for the tourist home, he learns the mysterious circumstances of his birth: he was deposited in the hearth, together with a curious birthstone, by a great sheet of flame. Armed with this information and with the birthstone, Diego sets out to consult his half-sister, an enchantress (*cf.* "The High Place"), who advises him to seek out his father. This father turns out to be one of the more lighthearted fallen angels, a demon who rejoices (quite literally) in the name of Red Samaël the Seducer. Although Samaël's interests—in his son's words—are more philogynic than philanthropic, he offers Diego his heart's desire, whereupon Diego asks for the oil heater that will take away the chill in the tourist home on cool mornings. And back goes Diego to an uneventful middle age with his faded mistress.

—*From a portrait by William L'Engle.*

James Branch Cabell—"the old fire flickers fitfully."

Diego can obviously trace his ancestry back not only to Red Samaël but to that most eminent of Mr. Cabell's heroes, Jurgen. For Jurgen also, in his time, relived his youth with the aid of magic, and chose, to the astonishment of his supernatural patron, to return to the comforts of a bourgeois existence and a scolding wife. Jurgen, too, was a great talker; but the talk has worn a little thin in these thirty-two years. And the old tricks have gained in self-consciousness what they have lost in spontaneity. The old fire flickers fitfully in "The Devil's Own Dear Son"; but it would have been pleasant to see in the fiftieth volume a real *jeu d'artifice* in Mr. Cabell's grand manner.

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American-Chinese

KINFOLK. By Pearl S. Buck. New York: John Day Co. 1949. 406 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by
MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS

IT is difficult to remember how many novels Pearl Buck has written since "The Good Earth." The image she created of a strong, simple, realistic people toiling their lives away on the great brown plains of China, among a few mud villages lost in a dun twilight within a horizon surely more vast than any other, cannot be forgotten.

Her later novels present some phase of Chinese life shrewdly and with point, such as the unusual story of the old Jewish family losing its identity under Chinese dominance, which was the subject of "Peony." But the impact of these novels is not that of her first classic. Her style also has changed from those early, rolling Biblical periods, increasingly monotonous, to be sure, but magnificently adapted to the classic drama of her men of earth. It is now no more distinguished than that of a dozen of the better writers for popular magazines.

Perhaps that change in Pearl Buck's writing was inevitable. We have no right to demand that any writer keep on producing, over and over, the same great classic.

I think it has been brought about most by a deep conflict in Mrs. Buck's own thinking about Chinese and American ways of life. It is shown very clearly in her latest book, with its unevenness and excellences.

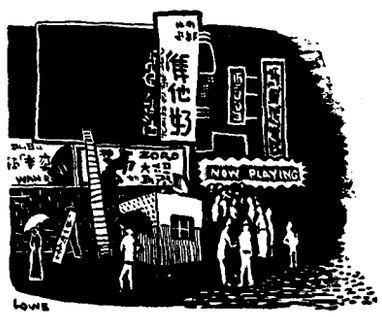
There are two sons and two daughters of the highly intelligent Confucian scholar Dr. Liang, whose success as a lecturer in New York has made it possible for him to live well in America and educate his children as Americans. There are portraits of prosperous New York Chinese merchants and an exotic, half-Chinese woman-of-fashion against a background of superficial New York intellectual circles. On the other hand, there is Mrs. Liang, the comfortable, rather stupid, homesick Chinese mother, unable to adapt to the life in which two of her children become completely absorbed. Young Dr. Liang and his capable sister Mary return to China, convinced that their work is there. The Americanized daughter and son fail to make an adjustment to Chinese life. But Dr. Liang and Mary rediscover China and become integrated in their ancestral village, under the dominance of the inimitable Uncle Tao.

It is Uncle Tao who is the great character of the book. In giving him to us in all his vigorous reality as landowner in his own dirty Chinese village, with his fleas, his tumor, his bad temper, his honorable dealings with his family, his frowsy household of disregarded women, and his age-old conflict with "the men of earth," Pearl Buck has recaptured her own deep vigor. Through Uncle Tao the landlord we understand the eternal durability of China itself. His loyalty to his family is the rock on which the Chinese people have rested their culture for all these centuries. His lack of interest in all people outside his own family, his attitude toward women and the peasant workers of the soil, his obstinacy, are China's weakness also as his realism and endurance are her strength.

That must be the China whose ancient order within the family Pearl Buck learned to love in her youth and misses now. She makes it more fundamentally valuable than the New York way of life, which she despises. This would be a better and stronger book if she had not bothered to give us in such detail the life of Dr. Liang, the faceless Confucian intellectual.

Her conflict is that she is also American, with a missionary zeal for health and public welfare and sympathy for the unfortunate. She cannot leave China alone. Her Americanized young man and woman find peace in bringing sanitation to that Chinese village. But the threat of Communism is rising like thunder beyond the horizon. What will happen now, we cannot help asking her, to Uncle Tao and the American-bred Liangs when the Communists really descend on the village, as the daily papers show that they have? Which will survive? Mrs. Buck does not tell us because she cannot be sure whether Uncle Tao's ability to accept fate is a more durable thing than what she calls the "guilt-ridden" American fight against disease and despotism.

If she feels that in "Kinfolk" she has shown us the happy result of a true meeting between East and West, then I can only say she does not realize how uneasily she has established it.



Fruits of Rebellion

THE EVENING AND THE MORNING. By Virginia Sorensen. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1949. 341 pp. $3.

Reviewed by DALE L. MORGAN

"THE EVENING and the Morning" is a fine and in every way distinguished work, as satisfying a novel as I have read in several years, and one which abundantly realizes every promise of Virginia Sorensen's first three novels. In these pages two years ago I complained of a dissociation in her work, that she seemed to be writing stories about people, not writing about people directly. I have no such objection now. The experience of reading her new book is that of having lived with people—and people who disturbingly, inexorably, through all their diversity and complexity, are yourself. That is the power and the beauty of this novel, that somehow or other it is everybody's autobiography.

To tell her story, Mrs. Sorensen has returned to the scene of her second novel and of her own childhood, the town of Manti in Utah's Sanpete Valley, a place for which she has a profound feeling and about which she writes with a penetrating understanding. The settlers of this high mountain valley were predominantly Danish, as is Mrs. Sorensen herself, and she writes about them as the generations have worked upon and "Americanized" them. Because these people whom she knows were Mormon converts, Mormon themes here as elsewhere occupy Mrs. Sorensen's pages, but let us make this clear, she is no writer of "Mormon novels." It is only by accident of her birth or theirs that the people she writes about are Mormons rather than Amish or Pennsylvania Dutch, and their problems are the problems of people everywhere who somehow must make good lives for themselves, each bringing order out of his individual chaos.

In this new novel it is Kate Alexander's life that we are mainly concerned with, but Kate's life is inseparable from the whole life of her family, her children, even her grandchildren. Kate's desires and needs have shaped the desires and needs of her daughter, antithetical as these are, and Dessie's imperatives in turn have molded her husband's life, and her children's. All of them alike seek something to hold to, emotional security, but for some this security is attainable only by the route of rebellion. That becomes perhaps the major theme of the book, the neces-

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sity, the difficulty, and the fruits of rebellion.

Eighteen-year-old Kate Black had married the slender widower Karl Alexander because he was good, because he was kind, and because he was the first man who asked her. But Kate came to learn that there are deeps within a woman which simple goodness can never be adequate to plumb. Eventually she had to seek from the young fiddle-maker Peter Jansen, as he from her, the ecstasy and misery that existed for neither of them within the blank walls of their marriages. Yet Kate and Peter were responsible persons who had to recognize their marriages and families as realities from which they could not run away. Only Marya, sister of Karl's dead first wife and of Peter's own wife, came to suspect what existed between them and that Dessie was the child of Peter. What came of this relationship finally, the emptiness and the irony, is brilliantly and compassionately chronicled.

Kate's story is told on the occasion of her visit to her daughter's home during six hot July days of 1922, and the story proceeds in two dimensions, the six days of the present and whole lifetimes of the past, which is not the past at all but the urgent present. The opening pages are a little difficult, as difficult as Kate's absorption into the bloodstream of her daughter's family life, but as we begin to know Kate we are caught up in the spell of her story, not to be released until she sits at last in a railway coach by night, her granddaughter's sleeping head pillowed on her lap, remembering how evening follows morning, and morning evening—nothing ever ended that is not also a new beginning.

In the space available to me it is impossible to convey the whole richness of this novel, the sharply etched portraits of so many different people, the many avenues of entrance into universal experience. This is a major novel that with all its technical brilliance is honest, simple, and direct, and distinguished for its understanding, its justness, its intelligence, and its feeling.

Social Comedy & the Supernatural

DESCENT INTO HELL. By Charles Williams. New York: Pellegrini & Cudahy. 1949. 248 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by ROBERT HALSBAND

THIS is an intricate work of imagination. Although permeated with the mystic and the supernatural, it is actually a theological problem novel, a modern morality. Such a book demands artistry of the highest order, and the late Charles Williams, who combined interests in poetry, religion, and metaphysics, was particularly equipped to write it.

The mundane framework is simple enough. The theatrical amateurs of Battle Hill, a middle-class community near London, are beginning preparations for their yearly pageant. It is to be "A Pastoral," by Peter Stanhope, an eminent poet who lives in the Manor House. The various citizens of the Hill are drawn into it, and by the time it is produced several months later there has been enacted a pleasant English social comedy, delicately tinged with satire. On this level, that of simple realism, the story has two components: the stage play and the players off-stage. As in Virginia Woolf's "Between the Acts," the play provides a proscenium for the essential spiritual drama and yet adds its own platform of symbolic meaning.

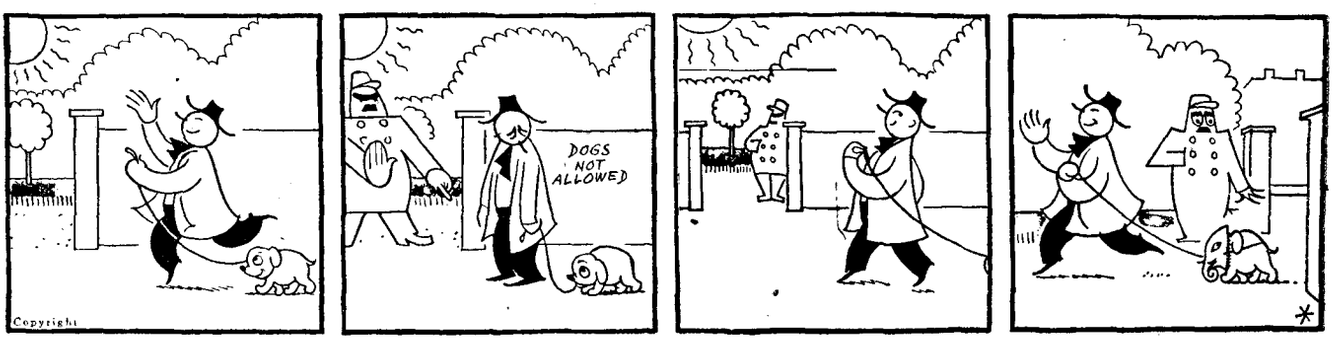
The production of "A Pastoral" also provides the pegs on which the mysticism is hung, so that the story actually pulsates between the brittle reality of English voices on hot summer afternoons and the misty depths of the supernatural. Here, beneath the material level, shade off the lives of the characters who exist also in sleep-dream and day-dream fantasies; and deeper still are those who have died on the Hill and whose spirits still haunt it. The paths of the living and of the dead transect on all levels, and the dividing lines between corporeality and spirituality and between present and past are erased. The common meeting ground is the Hill, where in a bright unearthly twilight spirits and humans meet in fellowship. This unearth, out of space and out of time, is beautifully described in a passage that ends: ". . . a single clock ticks or a single door opens in two worlds at once."

Pauline Anstruther, who plays the minor part of leader of the chorus in the pastoral, is the central character, though others are important, because she bears the evangelic burden. A sensitive, ingrown girl, she is frightened because she has been meeting on the road the image of herself, her *doppelgänger*. "The whole world was for her a canvas printed with unreal figures, a curtain apt to roll up at any moment on one real figure." Peter Stanhope rescues her from her hallucination by uncovering the childhood guilt that gave birth to it and by taking it on himself—like a parcel, as he says. This taking on himself of her guilt—its connection with psychoanalysis is obvious—is a link in a chain reaction, for Pauline takes on herself the burden of an ancestor who achieves salvation and martyrdom—in the sixteenth century! She also earns her own salvation by directing to the highroad a poor laborer who had escaped the misery of his life by hanging himself on the Hill, and who as a spirit had been wandering between two worlds until she goes out to meet him.

There are others, too, who are guests in alien worlds. Lily Sammile (Lillith), foiled in her wickedness, is last seen in a setting of apocalyptic magnificence, beneath the graveyard, surrounded in the gold-specked darkness by her victims, inhabitants of the cities of the plain. The piteous Wentworth is the sinner whose agony is ended by a descent into hell, when we see him at the end of the novel as he is "drawn, steadily, everlastingly, inward and down through the bottomless circles of the void."

It is curious, actually, that although

(*Continued on page* 32)



"Of all animals!" —*Piet Hein.*

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Americana. *Abysmal was the word to describe the ignorance of the average American about his own continent three decades ago. Since then, thanks to the automobile, as well as the patriotic surge and the movements of population that attended World War II, the depth of that ignorance has shrunk considerably. Two of the books reviewed below deal with a section of North America still hard to reach and still little known. An adventurous couple, Constance and Harmon Helmericks, report their unconventional experiences among the Eskimos in "Our Alaskan Winter." Leslie Roberts has used extensive library research and three look-sees to spin the saga of that great northwestern Canadian river "The Mackenzie." . . . Other notable books of the week include Fletcher Pratt's profiles of "Eleven Generals" and Vera Bloom's guide to what is* comme il faut *in Washington's social circles—"The Entertaining Lady."*

War Chiefs from 1775-1945

ELEVEN GENERALS. By Fletcher Pratt. New York: William Sloane Assoc. 1949. 355 *pp.* $5.

Reviewed by LLOYD LEWIS

HAVING decided to make a book of some articles written by himself about various American generals, Fletcher Pratt concocts a preface in which he tries to establish a common denominator between them. Since their similarity turns out to be little more than that they were all successful battle commanders, were aggressive, relied on fire power, and had a touch of amateurishness about them, the introduction is unnecessary.

Each article stands alone, sharp, clearly drawn, written with a vivid swiftness which is always sagaciously kept from running away into the open road of pure narrative. Mr. Pratt can combine criticism and story-telling as few modern students of the military art can hope to do.

With the exception of Sheridan, whom he sketches most brilliantly of all, and Omar Bradley, whom he apparently understands the least of all his eleven men, Mr. Pratt's subjects are not the Washingtons, Lees, Jacksons, Grants, Shermans, Eisenhowers, and MacArthurs. Instead they are Nathaniel Greene and Mad Anthony Wayne from the Revolution, Jacob Brown and Richard M. Johnson from the War of 1812, John Buford, George H. Thomas, and James H. Wilson from the Civil War, Charles P. Summerall of World War I, and A. A. Vandergrift of World War II.

His sketch of General Sheridan is not only the most vividly written but the most imaginatively penetrating summation, short or long, ever done on the man whom Grant repeatedly ranked with Frederick the Great. From his own studies of the military art, Mr. Pratt concludes, "The limits of Sheridan's talents were never reached; perhaps there were none."

Sheridan's greatness was his versatility. Nobody could beat him at securing information about the enemy before he struck, yet he could change plan instantly on the battlefield, and was incredibly flexible, being alternately dogged, cold, cautious, inventive, surprising. He concealed from the enemy what the enemy wanted to know; he revolutionized the organization, the morale, the use of cavalry; he broke the legend of the South's invincibility in the horse arm.

Nathaniel Greene produced something new in warfare, the strategic use of irregular troops. Wayne, famous for storming Stony Point, was greater fighting Indians. He upset the Red Devils completely with his use of Roman squares and other devices he found in the literary works of another frontier fighter, Julius Caesar. Jacob Brown, whom Mr. Pratt, in some excitement, calls "the best battle captain in the history of the nation," got prodigious work out of otherwise faltering militiamen and was the real victor in battles from which Winfield Scott emerged as the popular hero. Richard M. Johnson may or may not have killed the fabulous Tecumseh at the Battle of the Thames, but Mr. Pratt thinks he certainly invented the idea of harrying the Indians in their villages with mounted riflemen and of keeping them off balance in battle by sending in waves of horsemen to dismount and fight as infantry—the latter device evolving eventually into Sheridan's master-technique.

Between Johnson and Sheridan, came John Buford, the Union cavalry chieftain who died of pneumonia in 1863 but not before he had demonstrated that, as Mr. Pratt puts it, "the horse was as antiquated on the battlefield as the elephant." Buford taught horsemen to leave their animals when contact with the Confederates was made, and shoot from cover till heavy forces threatened, then into the saddle and away! George H. Thomas, "The Rock of Chickamauga," developed the counter-punch and at Nashville, Mr. Pratt says, "The Confederate Army collapsed like a kicked melon." Incidentally, it was not Thomas, as Mr. Pratt says, but his battery commander,

—*Culver Service.*

General Sheridan at the Battle of Five Oaks, April 1, 1865—"The limits of Sheridan's talents were never reached; perhaps there were none."

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Braxton Bragg, who received an "unprecedented" third brevet for gallantry at Buena Vista in the Mexican War. Also, in praising Thomas's bold young cavalryman James H. Wilson for whipping Nathan Bedford Forrest at Selma by "gettin' thar fustest with the mostest bullets," Mr. Pratt ignores the previous softening up which Forrest had taken at Tupelo from "Whisky" Smith and Joe Mowrer. Forrest was never the same after that earlier disaster.

Charles P. Summerall shortened World War I with his audacious belief that cannon existed primarily to protect infantry attacks, and was rated more highly by the Germans than Americans, a paradox which prompts Mr. Pratt to observe, "The Germans ought to know whose foot left the imprint on the seat of their pants."

On this point of recognizing talent in an opponent, it is interesting to recall that Gertrude Stein always thought nothing quite so absurd as General Lee's comment that, of all the Union generals he had faced, McClellan was the ablest—McClellan, whom he had defeated instead of Grant, who had defeated him.

Mr. Pratt's description of General Vandergrift's Homeric performance at Guadalcanal is, next to his Sheridan chapter, the prize in his collection—an exciting battle story and a critical evaluation of Vandergrift's invention of the widely-copied system by which a beachhead was seized, an airfield built, and a perimeter defense set up with an artistry that the Japanese never could fathom.

Omar Bradley, whose feats are described at great length but with less vividness than those of the ten other generals, receives Mr. Pratt's accolade, "the ablest soldier in any service during World War II, as he was certainly the most successful."

General MacArthur isn't going to like Mr. Pratt's book, but the lay reader will.

Lloyd Lewis, author of "Sherman, Fighting Prophet" and other books, is at work on a four-volume biography of General Grant.

Operating on High

THE ENTERTAINING LADY. By Vera Bloom. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1949. 245 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by BESS FURMAN

THE rise of the late Sol Bloom from San Francisco newsboy to veteran chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee was a saga of American showmanship as well as statesmanship. His sense of drama was cosmic, ranging from a world's fair midway, which he managed, to the launching of the United Nations, in which he helped. For more than twenty years, no names appeared oftener in Washington society columns and in the guest books of visiting princes and prime ministers than the Blooms, Representative and Mrs. Sol Bloom and their daughter, Miss Vera Bloom.

Sol Bloom's daughter and hostess, Vera Bloom, now appears as a modified Emily Post sharing her social how-it's-done with one and all. The entire text of the new Bloom book is for milady, she who goes about socially, entertains, and is entertained.

However, "The Entertaining Lady" also links up nicely with Vera Bloom's "There's No Place Like Washington" and Sol Bloom's recent autobiography as an illuminating triology on urban and official life and manners in this country and abroad.

For one whose father's avowed credo was "Nothing was ever too good for Vera," and who presented her with a famous voice teacher when she was born, and with a cart and pony and a sealskin coat before she was three, Vera Bloom emerges in her new book of life philosophy as a remarkably unspoiled, chatty, companionable person. She also displays much common sense on how to operate in highly-specialized circles.

Miss Bloom discusses parties, food, household decoration, clothes, hobbies and other interests, conversation and letters, and travel, all as enrichers of the women who go in for them, and those whose lives she touches.

On parties, her precept is plenty of preparation beforehand, followed by real relaxation while the party is on. She divides parties into small and intimate, and mob-scenes, contending that there are no in-betweens, at least in Washington and New York. She allows a lot of latitude on arrangements and food for the small party, but holds there is only one possible solution for the cram-and-jam type—an unlimited number of those titbits which constitute exactly one bite. Miss Bloom carries this idea even to the seeming extreme of the one-bite mince pie.

The subject of home decoration is treated by Miss Bloom in an open-minded mood. She advises the considered admixture of antique and modern to one's own taste and comfort, not being swayed by what "they" say.

But on clothes, Miss Bloom is a strict adherent of the basic-black school of thought. She assures that the basic black dress and suit, chosen with great attention to line and fabric, plus many a gay or witty hat, clever costume jewelry, and noteworthy furs will carry the social success all over the world and back, and in a minimum of suit cases. She advises not mere casual glances at, but hard study of the slick fashion magazines, to catch the mode of the moment.

As to social note paper, she is downright severe. Only white, ivory, gray, or gray-blue will do. "Forgive me for being so arbitrary about this," she pleads, "but the truth is a woman can get away with almost anything but the wrong writing paper."

Many a social dilemma is solved in the course of her book, one being that of thirteen at table—it's a matter of a splinter party. Another is the wrong corsage for the dress from a loved one at the last moment—pin it on the purse and tell him the truth, you can see it and enjoy it there better.

Miss Bloom reveals that food is the safest, surest subject, and longest lasting at diplomatic dinner tables. Her hints on social usages abroad, while not so comprehensive as the Army orientation booklets, at least point up the need for such a service. Her bits of description from her travels are teasers to further conversation.

And if Miss Bloom had already served up her best anecdotes in her earlier book, "There's No Place Like Washington," she has saved her best recipes for "The Entertaining Lady."

Bess Furman, a member of the Washington bureau of The New York Times, *is author of "Washington By-Line," recently published by Knopf.*

Trauma

By Georgie Starbuck Galbraith

WHAT do I do till the life comes back
To the nerveless flesh and the stoic brain?
Till the heart shall rouse itself to speak
To the icy blood in the frozen vein?
In time the blessèd tears will start
As senses sharpen to the rack
Of vital pain. But oh dear God,
What do I do till the life comes back!

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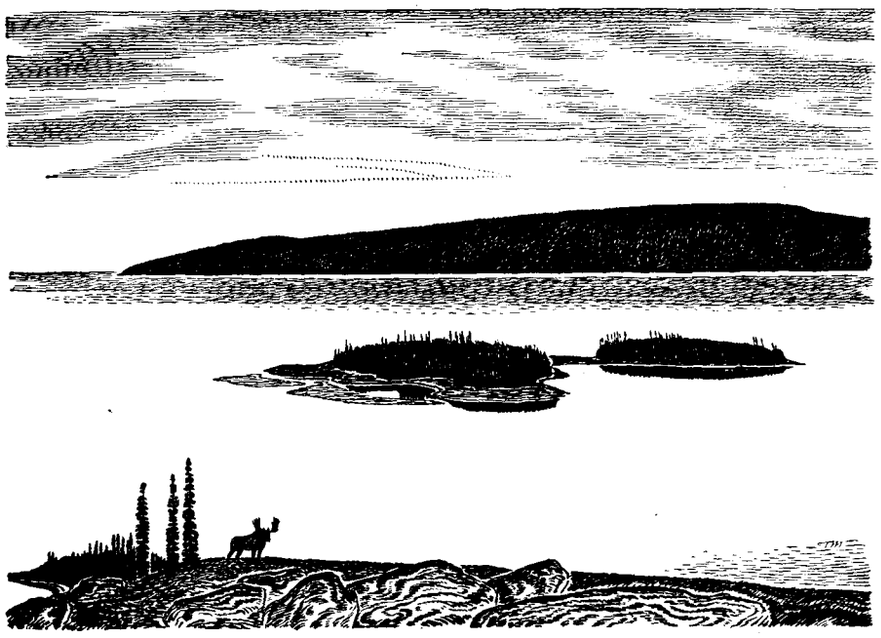

—From the book.

Big, Muddy River of the North

THE MACKENZIE. By Leslie Roberts. New York: Rinehart & Co. 1949. 279 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by
CONSTANCE AND HARMON HELMERICKS

THIS, the most recent in the Rivers of America Series, deals with a river whose historical and romantic qualities should make it one of the most interesting rivers on the continent.

Unfortunately, Mr. Roberts is not a naturalist. He does not get into the sweep and mood of the great river. He has only made three brief trips to it, or to parts of it, one of them a flight one afternoon to play poker with some local Mackenzie miners.

A news reporter—and probably a good one—who seems to have lived in cities all his life, he tries to write what he thinks the man-on-the street wants to hear. As a consequence, he does not write about the Mackenzie as a river in itself, but only as a stream that can do things for the cities!

Mr. Roberts's book is redundant with news reporter's phrases. He says that "seekers after gold have changed barren caribou pasture within the space of a year into a habitable industrial community," but neglects to state that the word "development" in press headlines may actually be spelled another way: exploitation. The developments he cites in Mackenzie River towns are all too often nothing more than barrooms and shacks. He fails to mention that when gold was struck and the town of Yellowknife was developed, for a long time the modern-day miners lived on caribou meat supplied them from the hinterlands by hired professional hunters—caribou hams only were used; the rest of the animal was thrown away. Certainly anyone who loves the wilderness yet left upon this continent does not regard it as an enemy of man. Yet this city reporter too often reiterates that it is. Actually we find today that the last remaining wilderness needs protection from man's ruthless aggression. But from his brief acquaintance with it, Mr. Roberts cannot be expected to know anything about the wilderness. Nor can he know much about Indian lore, or about the plant and animal kingdom.

It is in the historical field that he is at his best. This part of his book is entertaining, with its re-creation of little-known dramatic events in North American history having to do with early explorations and with the one-time Northern fur empire. But if only the author had told us just once that he slipped and fell into the chilling Mackenzie from his canoe, or how the driftwood comes by and carries one's fishnet away and leaves one standing hungry on the bank; if he had told us about the big Mackenzie chee fish (sometimes called cooney) or of the mosquitoes and black flies that bit him and what it felt like—then we readers could know that we ourselves had visited that big muddy river of the North. Until some writer comes along

Cleopatra's Dust to William Shakespeare's Bones

By Starr Nelson

NOT marble holds her now; thy terrene moon
Glides in her golden robe on Egypt sand.
She troubles the Nile; in Karnak's forest of stone
Roams—yet is captive to thy moveless hand.
Moving, thy fingers wrought her such a queen
As history's doughty hand dare not undo—
And thou, wouldst thou unlimn what thou didst limn?
Ah, but thy bones unbending cry out "No!"
Then dream by the river Avon a century more,
Three centuries—ten—till thine own dust be shaken.
What hath the moon to lose in such cold war?
'Tis not the moon sighs, when the dark earth's taken,
By Isis, this man hath not put off his will—
I have immortal longings in me still.

O, hast thou known the moon's dark side, how fair
This wanton wraith to him gone blind with light?
She hath no need of lotus nor of myrrh,
Whose flower is nightshade and whose scent is night.
Give her mandragora and the wind's wild zither—
So feast, and to the ancient music swoon;
She is a mistress like to no one other,—
And no man holds her 'ere his bones be blown.
Thy curse hath stopp'd upon thy tomb too long! . . .
But comes at last the dark familiar ghost,
And she hath art to unsing the scarab song
That keepeth thee within that stony breast.
Not marble, no, nor yet thy powerful rhyme
Shall stand against the siren dust of Time.

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who can do this, the Mackenzie River for most of us will continue to be unreal.

The book is illustrated by Dhoreau MacDonald. His work shows in one glance that he knows his subject. His birds are not just birds; they are snow goose, arctic loon, and swan. His trees are the arctic kind. His shores of Great Bear Lake are rocky with a great expanse of water and sky. The work has sympathy and illuminating detail. Mr. MacDonald catches the spirit of the Mackenzie region.

Constance and Harmon Helmericks are authors of "Our Alaskan Winter," reviewed in the next column.

Department of Sweaty Amusements

SPORTS PAGE. By Stanley Woodward. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1949. 229 pp. $2.95.

Reviewed by RED SMITH

STANLEY WOODWARD'S departure from the *New York Herald Tribune* last May caused a commotion in the newspaper business, for there was no sports editor who enjoyed the respect of more newspapermen. There was a wide professional opinion that his sports pages were the best of his time, maybe the best of any time.

Now the top man in his field has written what seems to this reviewer to be the best and most readable book yet published about newspapers. This is not an impartial view; it is prejudiced by friendship for the author and a special interest in the subject matter. This would be true in the case of almost any other professional of the sports pages.

According to the dust-jacket blurb, "Sports Page" tells about "breaking into the business; the writing and editing of a story from press box to copy desk; the art of being a columnist; the specialized details of how such events as baseball, football, boxing, and horse racing are covered." It does so. But this sounds like the prospectus of a textbook on journalism. It should not frighten off readers who seek entertainment rather than vocational instruction. Schools of journalism might profitably make Mr. Woodward's book required reading but students will find its style and content refreshingly unlike those of the other texts in the campus store.

This is the liveliest sort of reading, stimulating and provocative. It hits like Joe Louis, covers the field like Joe DiMaggio. Here is the unmitigated "Coach" Woodward sounding off in the manner that made his column a hissing and a byword in Columbus, Ohio (he said Ohio State had a good second-rate football team), heated Minneapolis tempers to a fine Scandinavian boil (he did not idolize the University of Minnesota coach, Bernie Bierman), and rendered him *persona vomica* among Latin scholars at Princeton (he called Nassau undergraduates "implausible brats").

In "Sports Page," the Woodward javelin skewers both the dunderheads of the fun-and-games department and the sacred cows in the newspaper hierarchy. As to the former: "the reporters of the Carnera age were either wide-eyed or bought. It would be kinder of me to say they were crooks, but I gravely fear many of them were something worse — ironheads." As to the latter: "In every newspaper office there is a corps of older men, frequently serving as top editors, who can't take it with them (a) because of the natural difficulties involved, (b) because they never had it." Charity does not distinguish development of this theme. What does distinguish the book is candor, a towering integrity, and a deep respect for and devotion to newspaper work and the working newspaperman. When the author quit one paper his publisher gave him a letter of recommendation which pointed out: "Woodward did not drift into this business. He came to us because newspaper work is the only work he wants to do."

There is also a splendid intolerance of those persons, including top editors, who look upon the sports sections as the bargain basement of the store, a department staffed by cases of arrested development and patronized by a clientele that bathes irregularly and cannot read without moving the lips.

Earlier books about newspapers have devoted, somewhat grudgingly, one chapter to the sports section. The first volume to be given over entirely to the department of sweaty amusements describes in honest detail the toil and tears and skills that go into the job of telling the reader who won and by what score. Stanley Woodward sees sportswriting as a respectable job for accomplished craftsmen. He makes it sound like a lot of hard, bone labor, and wonderful fun, which it is.

Red Smith is sports columnist for the New York Herald Tribune.

Eskimo Life

OUR ALASKAN WINTER. By Constance and Harmon Helmericks. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1949. 271 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by MAURINE BROWN

IN this latest volume by the Helmericks, husband and wife, some of the Eskimos are named Roland and others Ook-sook. This is a sample of the fidelity to truth and fact which the Helmericks always have shown in their books about Alaska. No effort is made to give a conventional, trite picture of Eskimo life. Like Horace Greeley, the Helmericks are "not afraid to print what the good Lord lets happen."

The locale of "Our Alaskan Winter" is the Arctic seacoast between the mouth of the Colville River and the Mackenzie delta. Eskimo villages dot this bleak shore. Hunting occupies most of the time. The Helmericks go out with the natives in quest of caribou, seal, and the great white bears. Success in the villages is judged by skill with spear and rifle.

Much nonsense has been written about Alaska. The Helmericks are expert dispellers of this. Caribou bulls often lag behind when the herd is pursued by wolves or men. Some so-called "naturalists" claim this is to guard the cows and fawns. "Another story for children," scoff the Helmericks. The simple truth is that the bulls are too old to run as fast as the others!

Throughout a long Arctic winter Constance and her husband were remote from other white people. No succor would have been possible had one of them come down with an infected appendix or blood poisoning. Yet they thrived and were healthy. And these were ordinary city folks from urban beginnings. This challenges the notion that the present generation of Americans is afflicted with softness and languor. "Our Alaskan Winter" is up to the high standard of the other books about the lonely north by this unique and adventurous couple.

Occasionally we get a glimpse of the simplicity of the native folks. The Eskimo family named Roland immediately asked the Helmericks about Dr. Stefansson. They had "known the great explorer well, twenty-five years ago, and they supposed that probably all white people knew each other"!

Maurine Brown has made many trips to Alaska with her husband, Richard L. Neuberger of the Portland Oregonian. *She has contributed to* Liberty *and other magazines.*

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Ideas and Studies.

The number of Americans who deserve to be called great philosophers is exceeding small. Emerson, James, Dewey—there are few others whose ideas can be called major contributions to the stream of Western thought. Of the books reviewed below, three in particular illuminate the course of American speculative thinking. Samuel H. Beer's "The City of Reason" finds in the metaphysics of Whitehead ideas for an explanation of the ultimate basis of both ethics and politics. Morris R. Cohen's "Studies in Philosophy and Science" is the fourth posthumous volume from the pen of one of America's most stimulating philosophers; his autobiographical "A Dreamer's Journey" will be reviewed in an early issue. Because ours is primarily a business civilization, students will find the latest volume of Joseph Dorfman's "Economic Mind in American Civilization" a treasure-trove.

Beginnings of Modern Problems

THE ECONOMIC MIND IN AMERICAN CIVILIZATION. Vol. III: 1865-1918. By Joseph Dorfman. New York: The Viking Press. 1949. 494 *pp.* $6.

Reviewed by C. E. AYRES

IN this book we are the beneficiaries of a happy coincidence. It was, perhaps, the manifest destiny of the author of "Thorstein Veblen and His America" to go on and illuminate other facets of his country's mind. At all events, no one else was better qualified to do so; and it is our good fortune that this tremendous project, begun several years before the outbreak of World War II, has come to fruition just at this time. Never has it been more important that Americans should know their own mind, and never has the mind of any people been more important to all the world.

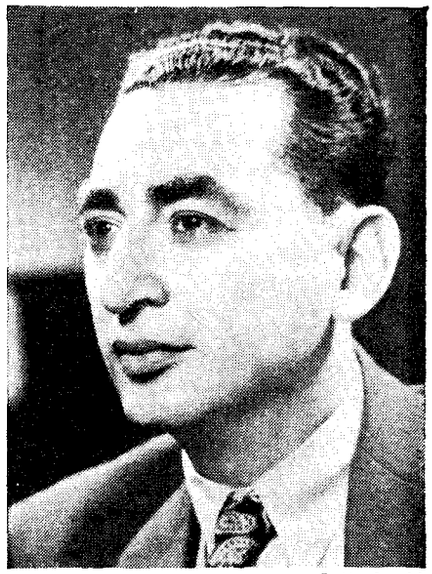
In this volume Professor Dorfman brings his great study to a temporary climax. The earlier volumes were no less important to an understanding of the forging of American mentality. But the society they described was quite different from the one in which we now live. In large part the issues with which it struggled were inherited from the old regime of Europe. The government which liberal-minded men then sought to restrain still wore the visage of the sovereign from whom Americans had always sought to free themselves. As Professor Dorfman says, the liberals of that day "were, therefore, not anti-capitalistic, but rather anti-feudal." But in the half-century that followed the Civil War the modern economy made its appearance, and with it modern problems, and so the modern mind.

It is a fascinating story, and one that has never before been so well, or so completely told. In this period monopoly first took its modern, industrial form, and "imperfect competition," as we now call it, first became endemic. In this period, too, agriculture first began to assume its role as the problem child of the American family, and organized labor came to stay, as an unwanted in-law, in the capitalistic household. Tidal waves of industrial progress alternated with ebb tides of depression.

How vigorous and varied were the intellectual responses to all these experiences! The story, as Professor Dorfman tells it, will surprise and fascinate even those who know our history well. Others will be astonished to learn how responsive the American mind has been all along to foreign intellectual developments, such as the German historical school and the marginalism of Vienna and Manchester, and at the same time how stubbornly independent Americans have been in reshaping such imports in the light of American experience.

It is a very heartening story. Here we see American economic thought taking its place on the world stage in the person of John Bates Clark, not perhaps for the first time but now for good. With the formation of the American Economic Association our country may be said to have come of age, economically. What follows is its adult life. But the story is by no means all one of academic conformity. During these years America gave Henry George and Edward Bellamy to world literature and in the next generation produced the greatest dissenter of them all, Thorstein Veblen.

Not the least remarkable of Professor Dorfman's achievements is his ability to paint equally sympathetic and sensitive portraits of minds as diverse as those of Clark and Veblen. Every scholar will of course find points on which to take exception. I would have to take exception to the statement that Veblen regarded technology as an institution. But all readers will await the author's final volume with eager expectation. For reading the mind of our own day will be the acid test of Professor Dorfman's objectivity!



—*Lotte Jacobi.*

Joseph Dorfman—"reading the mind of our day will be the acid test."

C. E. Ayres, professor of economics at the University of Texas, wrote "The Divine Right of Capital," "The Theory of Economic Progress," and other volumes.

Soaring Cerebration

STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE. By Morris R. Cohen. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1949. 278 *pp.* $4.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT BIERSTEDT

ONE of the stories currently told about the late Morris R. Cohen concerns a student of philosophy who, at the end of his course of instruction, complained that the professor had destroyed his traditional beliefs without giving him anything in their place. To this Cohen promptly retorted, "It is not recorded that Hercules was required to do more than clean the Augean stables."

The story is possibly apocryphal, but it is entirely in character. Cohen employed so rapid and at times so rampant a wit that his philosophic colleagues learned always to respect it and, sometimes, to fear it. At City College of New York for many years and, after his retirement, at Stanford,

(*Continued on page* 23)

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The Saturday Review of Literature

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Popular Taste and the Pulps

THE announcement by Street & Smith, long publishers of a highly successful string of popular magazines, that it is about to cease issuance of pulp periodicals, opens up an interesting field of speculation. Surely it cannot be that television, cited by the owners as a principal factor in their decision, has already so diverted the market from pulp periodicals as to render further publication of them commercially unprofitable. The roots of the matter must lie deeper than that—in some widespread change of public interest, some shift of emphasis in the intellectual climate of the nation.

One optimistic interpretation of the phenomenon springs immediately to mind, only, alas, to appear refutable at once. For in the face of the wide popularity of the comics, the favor which soap operas enjoy, and the sales of mysteries and Westerns in cheap reprints, it would seem daring indeed to ascribe the swing away from the pulps to any extensive improvement in literary taste. And this despite the fact that, as would probably be readily granted, there is a constantly increasing literate public and, as a corollary, a steadily growing number of perceptive and critical readers.

The democratic process would of itself insure that. For in a nation where education is the opportunity of all, there must necessarily be a constant increase in the level of appreciation and intelligence; even though with the many education may go no more than skin-deep, with some it will penetrate far, and among these latter the coefficient of expansion will be high. Yet the development of critical taste, as aside from fashion or fad which may create the impression of taste while mere imitation or blind acceptance of opinion, is slow, and the criteria it establishes only gradually seep down to the many from the few. There are, however, forces as potent as taste—which perhaps in another definition of the term might be called taste—which actuate the public in their interests and their attitudes. These forces are compact of events and emotions, of trains of thought and habits of solicitude and it is they which condition the time and its interest in literature as well as its political and social activities.

It would be strange indeed if a nation which had emerged from the calamitous ordeal of war found in the vicarious excitement of imaginary adventure the engrossing attraction which the latter had possessed in quieter days. For every exploit the pulps can show, the Marine of the Pacific or the foot soldier of the overseas forces can produce an infinitely greater. To men who met death head-on day after day the hairbreadth escapes of fiction must wear a paltry look, as for the airmen who battled in the skies, or who, for the matter of that, pour sustenance out of them today, the pseudo-science of the magazines must seem a shadowy projection of the reality. Their experience is a touchstone to truth, and the taste of fiction which sentimentalizes or sensationalizes it cannot but be acrid in their mouths. The war itself is still too near to have acquired any of the aspect of romance either for those who fought it or for those who watched with desperate hearts at home. If adventure is finding its place in literature today it is not in the sort of stories the pulps provide but in the bitter, brutal, and unsparing novels wrung from the ugliness of strife.

The world has come out of the valley of the shadow of death into an anxiety only less immediate and less terrifying than the catastrophic years of war. The mood of the hour is grim, fearsome, however surface manifestations may cover it up. American life was swung from its groove of serenity by the First World War. Its orbit of interest narrowed then, too, so far as extraneous adventure and derring-do were concerned. Then as now religion strengthened its appeal, the psychological assumed importance, the problems of economic, political, and international society became of major significance. Everything that loomed large at that earlier time has taken on increased stature now. It must be a stupid man indeed who goes unaware today of the dangers and conflicts which have closed in on the world. In the face of his realization of facts it would be incomprehensible if his tastes had not changed. They may not have improved, they may be no more discerning or critical than they were before, but certainly they have shifted focus. Is it too much to suppose that even readers of least tutored tastes have turned from the type of literature which once they liked not because of television, or of gas for their cars, or of movies or radios, but because there is branded on their souls the scars of a shattering experience which has altered their outlook on life and, if not elevated, at least sharpened their attitudes of mind?

—A. L.

Gutenberg Award

"ROOSEVELT and Hopkins," by Robert E. Sherwood, has been granted the Gutenberg Award of the Book Manufacturers' Institute as the volume which "most progressively influenced American thought in 1948." With the award Mr. Sherwood receives $1,000 and a plaque. Several months ago the editors of *SRL* gave the same book, which is published by Harper, their award for the "Book of the Year."

Authors of four other books were awarded special scrolls as runners-up: "Education in a Divided World," by James B. Conant (Harvard); "No Place to Hide," by David Bradley (Little, Brown); "Our Plundered Planet," by Fairfield Osborn (Little, Brown), and "The Road to Survival," by William Vogt (Sloane).

The five books were selected from a field of fifty-nine titles by a panel of three judges: Irita Van Doren, book editor of the *New York Herald Tribune*; Norman Cousins, editor of *SRL*, and Dr. Henry C. Link, president of the Psychological Corporation.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"The Pollsters"

SIR: In his excellent article "I Still Believe in Polls" [*SRL* Mar. 26] Mr. Roper might have added one further observation. He could have told about the many fantastic stories that get bruited about regarding polling techniques. A good case in point is the book review written by Warren Moscow under the heading "Political Weather Prophets."

In his article Mr. Moscow says that a person purporting to belong to our organization told him that in the New York State election of 1942 we were employing "only two men using one telephone." Mr. Moscow says he did not place credence in the telephone call idea until he received a confirmatory letter a few days later.

This statement by Mr. Moscow amazes me in exactly the same way that Mr. Moscow would be amazed if he saw a statement in the *SRL* to the effect that all of the foreign dispatches published daily in his newspaper actually were not written abroad but were concocted in a loft in Brooklyn by an ex-liquor salesman.

I can assure Mr. Moscow that never in our entire history have we consulted any political writer or anyone else about any forecast which we have made. I can also assure Mr. Moscow that we have never based any poll result, election or otherwise, on telephone calls. We do all of our interviewing in person through field reporters.

I can tell Mr. Moscow exactly how many people we interviewed in New York State because a record of every ballot which we have ever gathered is to be found in the files at Princeton University. In this particular election we interviewed 1,750 people, using trained interviewers who obtained responses in all sections of the state.

It so happens that in this particular election we forecast that Mr. Dewey would receive fifty-three per cent, Mr. Bennett thirty-nine per cent, and Mr. Alfange eight per cent of the votes cast. They received 53.0 per cent, 37.0 per cent, and 10.0 per cent respectively. If we could achieve this degree of accuracy with two men and a telephone, then we have wasted thousands and thousands of dollars keeping a field staff of some 1,200 persons.

GEORGE H. GALLUP.

Princeton, N. J.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Warren Moscow's reply follows: "I can understand Mr. Gallup's feeling of 'amazement.' It matched mine when the incident occurred. I am sure I need not argue the point beyond the fact that it did happen, and the confirmation letter was on Gallup poll stationery. Mr. Gallup, with possibly characteristic impetuosity, has decided that the election I had in mind was the gubernatorial election of* 1942 *in New York State, although I did not mention the particular election in my article in the* SRL. *The election in question was the election for Lieutenant Governor in* 1943, *an election which was unimportant, as I stated in the* SRL, *except for the fact that it confirmed Dewey's ability to carry New York State in that period for his administration."*

THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH

"Aren't you afraid, Mrs. Ross, that thirteen stars will prove unlucky?"

SIR: In his most interesting article "I Still Believe in Polls" Mr. Elmo Roper says that my book "The Pollsters" deals with "straw men" and that I "and some others set up a 'hypothetical pollster'—a gargantuan man of astounding proportions—who speaks for all those engaged in this field of research" and who has "an all-abiding faith in direct democracy, under which representative government is cast to the winds, and the results of polls are substituted in its stead."

I do not know about Mr. Roper's "others," but the only pollster I quote on wanting "direct democracy" is Dr. George H. Gallup. "After 150 years," Dr. Gallup said, "we return to the town meeting. This time the whole nation is within the doors."

I am not privy to the meaning Mr. Roper attaches to "gargantuan" but surely Dr. Gallup is not a straw man even though in company with Mr. Roper he takes straw votes.

LINDSAY ROGERS.

New York, N. Y.

"Bogus Best Sellers"

SIR: May I be permitted to comment on "Bogus Best Sellers" [*SRL* Mar. 26]?

"The Seven Storey Mountain" is primarily a religious book in the Catholic field. It is my understanding of the *Herald Tribune* and *New York Times* best-seller lists that the intention is to give sales of books which have a general appeal. Specialized books such as this would not normally be reported by our store and was not until its sale increased from the specialized Catholic field to readers of those of other than Catholic faith. Even so, my guess is that a great majority of the copies we have sold of this title have been to Catholics.

There are many titles of new books in the religious field of which we have sold far more copies than we have of "The Seven Storey Mountain," yet we have never reported them to *The New York Times*, the *Herald Tribune*, *Publishers' Weekly*, or the local newspapers. The same is true in our technical department. There are many books in this classification which we buy in 500 lots, and they far outsell any title in the regular trade department.

. . . . As one of the booksellers *not* queried by Mr. Gelatt as to the value of best-seller lists, I should like to be recorded emphatically in that group who are in favor of best-seller lists. As the originator of "What America Is Reading," I should like to give my reasons for recommending it to the *Herald Tribune*. The book trade for years had been cursed with six best sellers which narrowed the field quite definitely. I was attempting to make fifty best sellers, twenty-five fiction and twenty-five non-fiction, instead of the old six best sellers which, if I remember correctly, were practically all fiction. This, I believe, the *Herald Tribune* "What America Is Reading" has succeeded in doing, so much so that the same idea was copied by *The New York Times* at a later date.

I have had many complaints from publishers since "What America Is Reading" was introduced. Almost without exception, I have found that their titles were not well up on the list. These same publishers, a few months later when they hit the jackpot with a fast-selling book, would be high in their praises of "What America Is Reading." Jealousy hits even in the ivory tower of publishers.

. . . . I will grant without question

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that there are some abuses by some booksellers. Human nature being what it is, there are some black sheep in every field. I think it was President Roosevelt who in one of his happier moments said that the great majority of businessmen were honest in their intentions but that the trouble lay with the ten per cent who were not. This is true with booksellers, publishers, lawyers, doctors, and even editors of papers. I think that such an article as Mr. Gelatt's has a value because a little jacking-up will keep people on their toes, but I hate to see the readers of *SRL* get the impression, as they most certainly will, that there is an awful lot of crookedness in best-seller lists. This is just not so. If any way can be found to give a clearer picture of best sellers than we now have, I will be all for it. Mr. Gelatt's suggestion for improving it does not strike me as practical or obtainable.

RICHARD F. FULLER.

The Old Corner Book Store,
Boston, Mass.

SIR: PUT THE ST. LOUIS TIMES DOWN AS TOSSING OUT BEST-SELLER LISTS. WE'RE IN BUSINESS TO SERVE READERS NOT TO GIVE DISSERVICE.

NORMAN E. ISAACS,
MANAGING EDITOR.

St. Louis, Mo.

English Teachers and *SRL*

SIR: Martin Wolfson's letter asking what is wrong with teachers of English [*SRL* Mar. 19] cuts a broader swathe than his limitation of the problem to high-school teachers who do not derive the benefit they should from reading *SRL*. Too many teachers of English everywhere are out of touch with the realities of life.

"Words, words, words"—that's what is wrong with teachers of English, and the professional system of training these teachers aggravates the evil. Teachers need jobs, and jobs are secured through graduate credits. More and more courses in literature, language, and education, more and more letters after one's name, have given us the teachers of English that we have.

. . . . It is the insecurity of limited experience that promotes escapism into verbiage. Inadequacy flocks with its own kind. The anemia of departmental inbreeding has devitalized more studies than the English merely. The vicious circle must be broken, but the torture on the wheel will be long and hard.

SARAH WINGATE TAYLOR.

San Rafael, Calif.

SIR: May I ask by what methods Mr. Wolfson is able to distinguish so expertly between English teachers who do read *SRL* and those who don't? Or do all English teachers with whom he is acquainted read *SRL* and thus make such glib generalizations on his part possible? Personally I heartily object to being classified as blasé, nor do I enjoy the implication that I am "inflammable." As a teacher of English—and not an English teacher—I feel obliged to defend my alert and interested colleagues, who incidentally also read *SRL* weekly. It may indeed be true that we do not appear each morning with a "glow of fire" in our eyes, but it is equally true that we do attempt daily to assist our young students in attaining a maturity that is realistic and yet not artificial. Furthermore, we teachers read other magazines and pamphlets; thus Mr. Wolfson would do well to check on the effects of other reading. Granted that *SRL* furnishes inspiration and delight to us all, it should not be expected to bear the entire onus of ineffectual teaching wherever found—and teachers of English are not immune to this criticism. Teachers, as people, are not perfect; some are good; others are fair. It is all a matter of degree. There are not teachers; there is instead the teacher whose moral fiber is an individual growth pattern, and not a matter of paper imposition.

EVELYN I. BANNING.

Cambridge, Mass.

SIR: Martin Wolfson writes of some teachers in touch with reality who are ". . . . sicklied over with effete sophistication . . . ." Shades of Hamlet! Shades, also, of Noah Webster! What does Mr. Wolfson think "effete" means?

It would seem to me that *SRL* is intended primarily for adult readers who desire the considered views of competent literary critics. It is not intended, I believe, to arouse in them any great zeal for the reformation of their inferiors. Mr. Wolfson is evidently either a neophyte teacher or a would-be novelist in search of a theme. Several excellent novels about teachers have recently appeared; but none of them blames any teacher apathy on *SRL*. English teachers are probably a species apart, beyond the redemptive magic of *SRL*.

LOUIS SALBITANO.

Utica, N. Y.

SIR: How can Martin Wolfson generalize to the extent he does about people as varied as English teachers? How does he know that all English teachers read *SRL*? All I know do, but what does that show? . . . . I know English teachers who have climbed up into an ivory tower so that nothing outside the circle of their own egotism can reach them, but these, I feel, are the exception. Most English teachers that I know are good citizens, good neighbors, good parents, when they have reached that stage, and even Sunday School teachers or members of Kiwanis clubs or the League of Women Voters. Some of them don't even like coffee, but are addicted to tea, or enjoy hard liquor. . . . . We English teachers feel it is our business to teach literature and/or to teach our students to write clear, forceful, effective English. That is no easy job. Even if we had the time for propaganda, we respect our students too much to try to superimpose on them our own particular politics, religion, or philosophy of living. If we can awaken in them some intellectual curiosity so that they may think things out for themselves, we will do about all that anyone can expect of us.

MARY PAXTON KEELEY.

Columbia, Mo.

SIR: Perhaps Martin Wolfson has observed only those teachers of English who teach it because it is their major—not their love. I am only a beginning teacher so have not yet lapsed into this moral sleep that Mr. Wolfson speaks of so knowingly.

I find that *SRL* causes me to "catch on fire" quite soon after opening it each Saturday, and, furthermore, I believe the flame is in evidence for my students all the next week.

MELVIN F. SAMPLES.

Guttenberg, Iowa.

Letters from Mark Twain

SIR: Mark Twain's Estate, of which the undersigned is one of the trustees, has a very important collection of Mark Twain papers and letters which will eventually pass to one of our great universities. Mark Twain was one of the world's great letter writers. There are literally thousands of Mark Twain letters in the hands of the public.

Mark Twain's daughter and his estate have arranged for an official volume of Mark Twain letters to be published by Harper & Bros. All holders of Mark Twain letters are invited to communicate with Mr. Dixon Wecter, Editor, Mark Twain Papers, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino 15, Calif.

Certain unauthorized persons have been soliciting copies of Mark Twain letters. While a Mark Twain letter may belong to its holder, the publication rights belong to the Estate of Mark Twain. The public should not be misled. It is right and in the public interest that the facts should be made known. As Mark Twain said: "Always do right. This will gratify some people, and astonish the rest."

THOMAS G. CHAMBERLAIN.

New York, N. Y.

The Ubiquitous Typo

SIR: In your LETTERS TO THE EDITOR of Feb. 26 there was one of mine, but I beg you—Henry Miller's name is not Henry Meller, and John Wilstach's name is not John Welstach. I do not write naughty words like Mr. Miller, which is one of many reasons I do not share whatever kind of renown he boasts about—but I have had readers of my books, etc., and would still like to sign myself—

JOHN WILSTACH

Rhinebeck, N. Y.

Atomic Age Fables

VIII. Man Is the Measure

"I WONDER who lacks more: a man or an ant," said an ant.

"The ant, at least, is not aware of what he lacks," said a second ant.

"Are you so sure that man is?" asked the first ant.

—J. S.

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(Continued from page 19)

Yale, Harvard, and Chicago, he subjected many students to an almost excessive stimulation and his fame has consequently continued to grow since his death in 1947. Posthumous volumes from his pen, of which this one is the fourth (fifth if one counts the Holmes-Cohen correspondence recently edited by his son), have contributed their share to his substantial reputation.

All but one of the chapters in the present book have been reprinted from various sources, ranging from the *Philosophical Review* and the *Journal of Philosophy* to the *New Republic*, and dating back to 1910. The exception, a lecture and subsequent short seminar on philosophy and the scientific method, is not located as to time and place of origin, but in it a certain participant, a "Secretary Wallace," suffers from one of Cohen's barbed responses. The essays as a whole fall into three groups, one on the philosophy of science, one on philosophy proper, and one on science. There is no indication of the identity of the person who selected them, but in view of what is included (for example, a short encyclopedia article on "Belief" and three book reviews) the reviewer regrets the exclusion of at least two things: one, Cohen's masterly article on the scientific method in the same encyclopedia, and the other, his famous review of Vernon

L. Parrington's "Main Currents in American Thought." There is enough here, however, to give the reader a notion of Cohen's erudite performances in the realm of ideas.

The outstanding exhibit in this collection is entitled "Some Difficulties in John Dewey's Anthropocentric Naturalism." Here, as in some of the other essays, we find Cohen at his best, criticizing with shafts both pointed and profound what he conceived to be the erroneous emphases of his contemporaries. He saves his most withering sarcasm, however, for Francis Bacon, the apostle of empiricism who is popularly believed to have founded the modern philosophy of science. Cohen maintains that far from launching the enterprise known as modern science, so pure and planless an empiricism as Bacon espoused could not possibly result in scientific knowledge, nor even in an orderly classification of things.

There is really only one word for Cohen. He was brilliant. No one who enjoys watching an agile mind at work can fail to find excitement and even high intellectual adventure in these essays.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

BLOOD IS THICK

Fannie Gross, of Asheville, N. C., lists in column one eighteen Shakespearean characters who are blood relations to the eighteen characters in column two. Can you match them up? Allowing six points for each correct answer, a score of sixty-six is par, seventy-eight is very good, and eighty-four or better is excellent. Answers are on page 32.

1. Antonio, father to	( )	Alonso
2. Baptista, father to	( )	Coriolanus
3. Benvolio, nephew to	( )	Cressida
4. Brabantio, father to	( )	Cymbeline
5. Calchas, father to	( )	Desdemona
6. Celia, cousin to	( )	Duncan
7. Claudio, brother to	( )	Earl of Gloucester
8. Donalbain, son to	( )	Hamlet
9. Duke of Clarence, brother to	( )	Henry IV
10. Edgar, son to	( )	Hermia
11. Egeus, father to	( )	Isabella
12. Ferdinand, son to	( )	Katharina
13. Gertrude, mother to	( )	King John
14. Guiderius, son to	( )	Leonato
15. Hero, daughter to	( )	Leontes
16. Jessica, daughter to	( )	Montague
17. John of Gaunt, uncle to	( )	Pericles
18. John of Lancaster, son to	( )	Proteus

Rationalism

THE CITY OF REASON. By Samuel H. Beer. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1949. 227 *pp.* $4.

Reviewed by BRAND BLANSHARD

WE are slowly rounding a corner in the discussion of ethics and politics. The relativism of Westermarck, Mannheim, and "Patterns of Culture," so popular until yesterday, is already beginning to seem dated. Here is one of the evidences of the change. Samuel Beer, who is an associate professor of government at Harvard, has written a book in which he insists on the existence of a common reason, on objective standards in morals, and on metaphysics as the ultimate basis of ethics and politics. In his work the reaction against reason has come full circle and reached again an uncompromising rationalism.

Mr. Beer begins by considering the relativity not of morals but of truth. He takes John Dewey as a leading representative of this doctrine and attempts to show that in his work the doctrine is self-defeating. Dewey of course disbelieves in any fixed rational structure in the world; for him the business of thought is not to follow the outlines of such a structure, but to help us find means to our ends. Knowledge is an instrument in action; that is why he calls his theory instrumentalism. To this Mr. Beer replies that if there is no fixed structure in things, there are no fixed laws; and if there are no fixed laws, there are no means that we can wholly rely on to take us to our ends; and that means practical skepticism. I do not think Dewey would be much disturbed by this argument. He would admit that all beliefs are hypotheses whose success in application we can never count on with assurance. But he would add, why need we? Granting that the order in the world is not certain or complete, there is enough to make it profitable to guide our lives by it. More than that it is idle to ask.

Mr. Beer is more convincing when he turns to the relativity of morals. Nothing is easier, he would agree, than to show that hospitality among the Arabs differs from that of Australian aborigines. But does this sort of evidence show that beneath these varying customs there is no underlying reason, molding them slowly into conformity with a common ideal of the good life? Not at all. The fact is that everywhere alike there is the desire to realize such faculties as one has; everywhere there is at least the budding awareness that if this fulfilment is good for me, it is good like-

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wise for others, and that in my conduct I must concede this. If my faculties compete for the right to fulfilment, it is reason that must settle the case in the light of my interest as a whole. If men or nations compete for the right to realization, reason must settle that too in the light of the good of society generally.

To those who work in philosophy all this will have a familiar sound. It awakes echoes of that classic ethics of self-realization that was taught at Oxford at the turn of the century, and particularly of that noble book by Green on "The Principles of Political Obligation," which remains in the reviewer's opinion the best book in English on political philosophy. This ethics had long roots that ran down into the subsoil of a profound metaphysic. The idealists believed that if men ought to be rational, it was in the end because, by being so, they could partake more fully in the life of the Absolute, which itself was wholly rational. Now Mr. Beer's theory has exactly the same sort of roots. But this time the subsoil is not Green and Bradley, but Whitehead. In two or three gallant chapters Mr. Beer tries to sketch the universe Whitehead lived in and to show that all advance in personal or political ethics must lie in more perfect adjustment to the sort of order it embodies.

Mr. Beer gives reasons for preferring the rationalism of Whitehead to that of the great idealists. These reasons are not, I think, quite convincing. Whitehead is of course more up to date; he knew his science as few philosophers have ever done; and to know one's science is in these days essential if any thinker is to hold respect. But not only is his terminology dreadful; his metaphysics is obscure beyond redemption even by Mr. Beer's able efforts; and he never worked out its ethical implications with anything like the clearness of the earlier rationalists. Mr. Beer could be followed more easily if he had himself followed a less murky light. Still, the main thesis of his book seems to me thoroughly sound, and the way in which he has worked it out reveals an unusual strength of intellectual grip. Indeed, it is a heartening sight to see a young political scientist striking down in this determined way to bedrock for the foundations of his political theory. Later work from his pen will certainly bear expectant watching.

Brand Blanshard, chairman of the department of philosophy at Yale University, is author of "The Nature of Thought" and co-author of "American Philosophy in Education."

Devaluing the Human Brain

CYBERNETICS: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine. By Norbert Wiener. New York: John Wiley & Sons. 1948. 194 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by JOHN B. THURSTON

IT appears impossible for anyone seriously interested in our civilization to ignore this book. It is a "must" book for those in every branch of science—engineers (all kinds), mathematicians, physiologists, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers, psychiatrists, chemists (all kinds), psychopathologists, neuroanatomists, neurophysiologists, etc. In addition, economists, politicians, statesmen, and businessmen cannot afford to overlook cybernetics and its tremendous, even terrifying, implications.

"Cybernetics" is the name given to the entire field of control and communication theory, whether in the machine or in the animal. It is derived from a Greek word meaning "steersmen." The name, coined in 1947, is as new as the science which, in 1943, had been "fairly born." But the environment of war and its concomitant and importunate need for mechanical computing machines, which led to the appropriation of large Federal funds for extensive research in this field, was just right to promote the rapid and spectacular growth of this infant. Today this lusty young science demands the most serious attention.

In the words of Professor Wiener, author of this exciting book, cybernetics "has unbounded possibilities for good and for evil. . . . The first industrial revolution . . . was the devaluation of the human arm by the competition of machinery. . . . The modern industrial revolution is similarly *bound to devalue the human brain* at least in its simpler and more routine decisions. . . . Taking the second revolution as accomplished, the average human being of mediocre attainments or less has nothing to sell that it is worth anyone's money to buy."

Norbert Wiener: "Cybernetics has unbounded possibilities for good and for evil."

Professor Wiener calls this "a preliminary book" on the subject of cybernetics. It is a beautifully written book, lucid, direct, and, despite its complexity, as readable by the layman as the trained scientist, if the former is willing to forego attempts to understand mathematical formulas.

One-fifth of the book is devoted to an introduction which explains the birth and development of cybernetics. These pages alone are worth the price of the book. It explains how, a decade ago, a group of young scientists at the Harvard Medical School began a series of monthly meetings on scientific methods which were later enlarged to include other scientists and how these led to the birth and development of cybernetics. The belief was held "that the most fruitful areas for the growth of the sciences were those which had been neglected as a no-man's land between the established fields." Cybernetics invades that no-man's land and unites engineers, physiologists, mathematicians, and other scientists in the development of the theories of control and communications in the animal and the machine and in the practical application thereof.

The chapter on "Cybernetics and Psychopathology" cannot fail to interest almost everybody. It shows that the same things which cause humans to go insane bring about insanity in the mechanical minds of the computing machines. Techniques similar to prefrontal lobotomy and shock treatment used to "cure" human minds are effective with berserk machine minds.

The wholly automatic factory can be developed with the expenditure of no more engineering effort than went into the development of radar in World War II. "It is unquestionably possible to construct a machine that will play chess . . . [just as well as] the vast majority of the human race."

The artificial brains described by Professor Wiener are startling machines. They accept information and instructions and act upon them. They can even gather information as bases

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for decisions. They perform more reliably, accurately, and quickly than human brains. They can remember for short and long periods of time. They can make decisions.

Wiener takes a dim view of the effects of cybernetics on our civilization:

> We [the cyberneticists] have contributed to the initiation of a new science . . . which embraces technical developments with great possibilities for good and for evil. We can only hand it over to the world that exists about us. . . . We do not even have the choice of suppressing these new technical developments. They belong to the age, and the most any of us can do by suppression is to put the development of the subject into the hands of the most irresponsible and most venal of our engineers. The best we can do is to see that a large public understands the trend and the bearing of the present work, and to confine our personal efforts to these fields, such as physiology and psychology, most remote from war and exploitation.

John B. Thurston is a management consultant associated with Wallace Clark & Co.

No Garden City Dream

CONCERNING TOWN PLANNING. By Le Corbusier. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1948. 127 *pp.* $2.75.

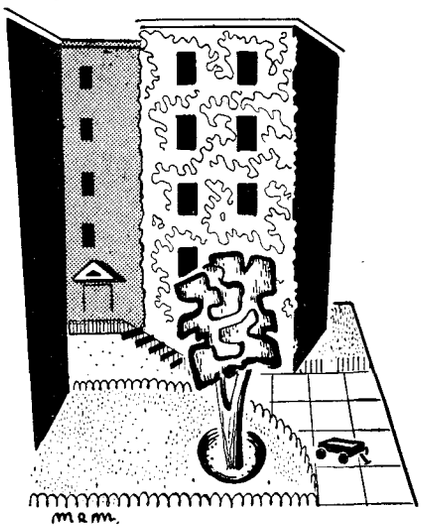
Reviewed by CARL FEISS

> The existence of a [single] family house stands today upon foundations which in a large measure no longer exist. . . . This so-called family house will never merit its title, but will drag society into the universal wasteland of garden cities. Universal, for the crisis is worldwide.

THIS statement (while I risk the accusation of grabbing out of context) reveals one of Corbu's attitudes so contrary to the American credo of "Home Sweet Home" and one of his more startling attacks on the Ebenezer-Howard, Raymond Unwin, Lewis Mumford Garden City Dream.

This book is a curious rehash of old ideas which have always been stimulating and new ideas which Corbu's mind seems to be continually germinating. Many readers have been and will continue to be annoyed by a style which is both egotistical and sometimes offensively on the defensive. Corbu is still whipping the academies, a sadistic pleasure in which he has indulged for many years without realizing that he himself is becoming somewhat of an academy. Since a large part of the world has conceded the fact that Corbu is one of its leading architects, and his influence has spread widely during the past ten or fifteen years, he cannot be held to blame for the fact that his disciples look to his works as rigidly as the disciples of Palladio and Mansart look to theirs.

His book is definitely French and nationalistic in its tone. A reader who had not been in Paris would find the first part most difficult to understand. This is partly due to the local character of the discussion, plus the rather scattered and incoherent statements based on a series of impetuous



and staccato phrases which have always been characteristic of Corbu's style. Part of the problem is that he always suffers through translation. His French is exceedingly vivid and he uses many words which, because of their idiomatic character, cannot be easily translated. The translator of any of his books labors under the difficulty of attempting to maintain a style type, while at the same time achieving a clear expression of a highly individualistic series of attitudes.

I have always considered Corbu's sketches as expressive for architecure as are Thurber's for social satire. For the layman, I should imagine that their legibility is questionable. For the initiate in architecture, they remain both expressive and charming. This book has the very unusual format of sketch illustrations opposite every page of text, illustrations which are carefully referred to and competently documented. For a newcomer to the philosophy of Corbu, "Concerning Town Planning" will be stimulating, and I believe will challenge the reader to a further investigation of his thought. To those who are familiar with his previous works, there will be very little found in this either new in theory or in esthetic. His attacks on the humdrum quality of British Garden City principles and his stressings of the capacity of society today to solve most of its problems mechanically are ideas which provide much room for debate and are certainly a healthy stimulus. To the newcomer to his thoughts, Corbu's romantic free flow of buildings and highways, independent of landscape and topography, comes as a startling contrast to some of the thoughts and works of Frank Lloyd Wright, as well as to the standard landscape schools.

A word must be given here as to one curious character of the book's development. The major part of the work is devoted to seventeen questions about architecture and city planning. The first three or four questions are directed specifically to destroyed towns and villages in France, until Corbu gradually broadens his questions to encompass regionalism in architecture and planning. The questions themselves, being both asked by him and answered by him, develop a sententious quality which is both provocative and annoying. There is also a very unnecessary and continuing "I told you so" attitude. Corbusier does not have to pat himself on the back, nor does he have to refer to his early works as continually as he does.

Perhaps the most worth-while thing about his book from the standpoint of the American reader is its attack on the accepted Anglo-Saxon methods of thinking about the community. This is not a personalized attack; rather it is directed at ideas. Curiously enough, many of the weapons used were fabricated in the Anglo-Saxon world and are adroitly directed against some of our most hide-bound ideas.

The book's worst qualities are its smugness and hollow oracular ringing of the bells of both truths and half-truths. The result is that it is neither a great book, nor a particularly good one. We will probably have to depend upon one of Corbu's disciples to winnow from all of his writings the great ideas which he has propounded. This will come at a later date. In the meantime, it is well worth a reader's while to encounter the personality of the man and to study both the text and illustrations of this little book. He will have fun with many of the ideas if he, after accepting the author's personality, is still willing to consider them. Corbu, like many individuals shouting in a world of conformists, is his own most difficult problem.

Carl Feiss is director of the School of Architecture and Planning of the University of Denver.

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The Legal Picture

THE LAW AND YOU. By Max Radin. New York: New American Library. 1948. 190 pp. 35¢.

Reviewed by WILLIAM M. KUNSTLER

DURING my law-school days, Max Radin was the only one of my instructors who looked venerable. Even the oppressiveness of a humid New York summer could not destroy the illusion. But appearances are deceptive and no more so than in the case of this short, stocky man who has devoted much of his life to the teaching of law. Endowed by nature with a sharp tongue, a keen analytical mind, and a consuming interest in the affairs of the community as well as the world, Dr. Radin becomes in the classroom a worthy opponent who can hold his own with the most searching of students, rather than the unreachable scholar his appearance suggests.

Anyone who has read his "The Law and Mr. Smith" needs no further introduction to his most recent offering, "The Law and You." The same clarity and excellence of expression, the same caustic innuendo, and the unmistakable Radin touch characterize both volumes.

"The Law and You" is an attempt—and it could be no more than that—to present to the lay reader the panorama of the law as it affects Joseph Doakes, an average citizen of these United States. In it, Dr. Radin has tried to lift the veil of mystery that gives the law the semblance of being a collection of rites and rigamarole understandable only to the elect. Without pontification or over-popularization, he presents those legal attributes that attach to individuals at various stages on the life trail, emphasizing the family, marriage and divorce, the community, commerce, labor, and constitutional rights.

Throughout, the reader will discover that quality which Dr. Radin's students most respected, namely, his impatience with the intolerant, the unjust, and the unworkable. He rails against miscegenation statutes, the Volstead Act, Southern voting restrictions, and commercial divorce laws. His criticism is the stronger for its implicitness and his clever use of the shattering analogy. That he is able to take as well as give is apparent in his recognition of the law's delay, the expense of litigation, and the hodgepodge of technical terminology behind which, in popular belief, the lawyer hides. In passing, he lightly slaps the wrists of Hollywood, the stage, and literature for their inaccurate and misleading portrayal of the lawyer and his job.

—*Kee Colman.*

"Max Radin rails against miscegenation statutes, Southern voting restrictions, and commercial divorce laws."

If there is any non-puristic fault to be found with his presentation, it lies in his insistence that the law must follow social habit. "The law can do nothing until social custom has relieved it of responsibility." Admittedly, with rare but significant exceptions, the law has lagged behind community mores. Yet Dr. Radin himself cites the case of *Perez vs. Lippold,* in which a courageous California court recently held that the state's miscegenation statutes were unconstitutional, denying to large groups of persons the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection of the laws and thwarting that spirit of fundamental equality with which our society is assumedly pervaded. To accept Radin's hypothesis at face value would be to deny to courts their traditional power to contravene the injustices that custom frequently creates. Surely, he is speaking historically rather than categorically.

"The Law and You" will not make every man his own lawyer, an accomplishment Dr. Radin could hardly have had in mind. At best, it can only clarify the legal picture in the lay mind. If its non-professional readers become more familiar with the development and practice of law, if they begin to comprehend the reasons behind both good and bad legislation and precedent, this little book will have served its purpose. And, although Dr. Radin vehemently denies any such intention, if it helps the attorney to understand the layman's deep-rooted mistrust of the lawyer and the law, it will have done infinitely more.

BOOK REVIEWING

(Continued from page 7)

imal. In the whole United States there are perhaps a score of people who are reasonably well paid for writing daily columns about books, such as I once did for the old *New York Evening Post* during twelve happy years. There are a few more jobs as literary editors which pay a livelihood and these are about all.

The bulk of book reviewing, at least ninety per cent, if not ninety-five, is done as a sideline and the most anyone gets out of it, even in New York, is an occasional check to help pay the grocery bill. The field is badly crowded in all metropolitan centers where writers congregate and the competition, even for small jobs, is terrific, so that at best one's total annual earnings might pay a month's rent at present prices, no more.

Most book reviewers in our system are, then, not professionals. Indeed, there is no such thing as the profession of book reviewing and almost none of literary criticism. People who write the reviews, as you must have observed, have usually attained distinction in some other field, which they are presumed to know well enough to give value to their judgments.

This is the practical answer to the question so often asked, especially of those of us who write book reviews, "How does one get started?" So far as the larger cities are concerned, the answer, in general, is to get yourself a reputation. Sometimes knowing an editor will help, because he may give you a chance, and if you deliver, send you more books. But he cannot afford to take many chances of this kind, for a number of very practical reasons, and therefore plays most of his cards close to the vest.

If, in spite of my attempt to paint the picture in its proper dark colors, you make up your mind that you are going to be a book reviewer, come hell, high water, or starvation, how should you prepare yourself for the job? I think the best answer, aside from mastering a specialty, such as learning so much about Stonewall Jackson, let us say, that all books on the subject automatically find their way to your doorstep, is to begin by making a careful and conscientious study of criticism, starting, naturally, with Aristotle's "Poetics," from which we all crib every day, consciously or otherwise, and coming on down to the latest and best book on the American novel, if it is fiction you happen to be most interested in.

Then, unless you wish to become a classicist, virtually a vanished species,

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that is, a person who believes there are set rules by which art may be judged, critical absolutes, you will at once put all your hardly acquired knowledge of the principles of criticism well back into the subconscious, where it will work quietly and unobtrusively, acting as a check and balance upon your emotional reactions.

If you choose any field to specialize in, mystery stories, biography, science, or whatever, you will as quickly as possible make yourself acquainted with the existing literature, so that to your abstract principles, you can add examples. You will, whether you wish to or not, acquire a set of values in relation to life which will get into all your reviews, because book reviewing, like all writing, is a constant—and frequently dangerous—process of self-revelation.

Then having read and read and read—because you cannot read too much if you are thinking of being a reviewer, although it is easy to read too much carelessly and thoughtlessly—you must then approach the job in an attitude. James Russell Lowell, who was a good critic, as you may and certainly should know, defined the best attitude as one of "wise skepticism," which I, as an admirer of Socrates, Montaigne, and Cervantes, consider the right choice. Henry Seidel Canby once said: "A good reviewer must have cool brains and a warm heart," which is not such a bad approach to life, either, when you stop to think of it. "Tough-minded, tender-hearted" is another way of saying it, and never the reverse.

Only the very young read books in order to slash them to pieces, although this approach has more than once proved to be a cheap and easy way to a quick reputation for superior intelligence and integrity. The reviewer's real job, his fundamental duty, is to hear what the author is saying, to see what he is trying to accomplish, and this, obviously, can only be done if one approaches a book open-minded and open-hearted. Next comes the task of trying to determine how well the author has delivered his message. Add these two factors together and you are ready to make your judgment, which if it is done justly and effectively, then becomes the satisfactory "report to the public" which is the goal of the good reviewer.

In my own long years as a book reviewer, I have tried constantly to keep two points in mind every time I have picked up a book to write about it. One is, how much it has cost the author to bring the work into being, and the other, how much it may cost a purchaser in hard cash if I persuade him to buy it. The first point makes me kind and patient, I hope, and the second, I also hope, careful of my judgments. The reviewer needs to be flexible in his standards, not over much influenced by the limitations of his personal point of view, tempering the strength of the breeze to the condition of the lamb.

If an established writer, who has enjoyed the sweets of fame and success produces a bad book, I believe the reviewer may very well say so, as emphatically as his courage and command of language will permit. But the heavy artillery should never be unlimbered against targets that do not call for it. The recognized writer has a responsibility to his public and if he does not appear to be living up to it, the public should be so informed, with no punches pulled.

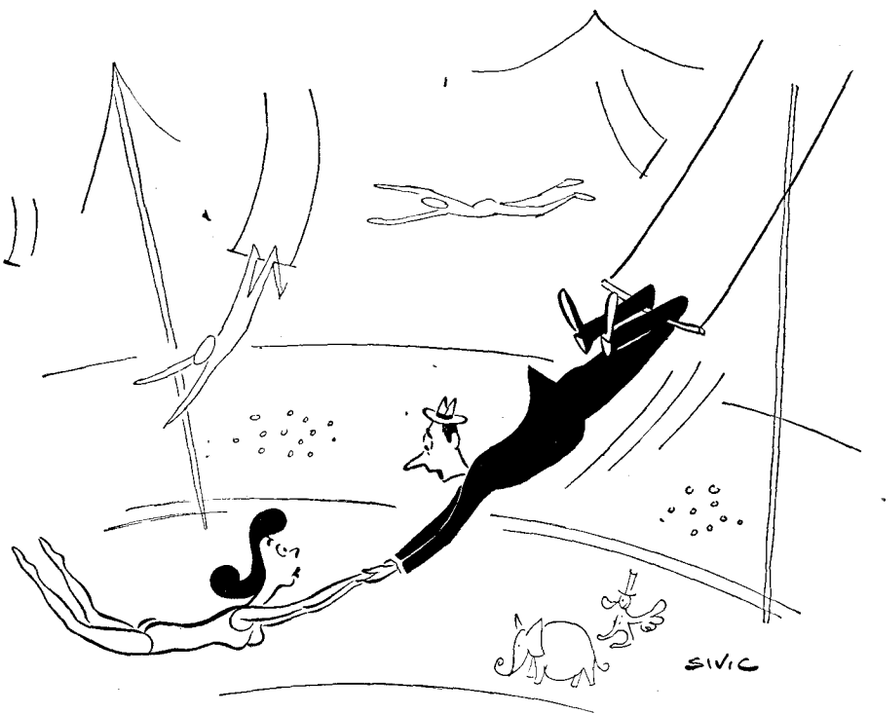
The hardest books to review are collections of poems and novels. A book in the field of atomic science is basically either correct or it is not and its qualities as art may make little difference, although many scientists have written most beautifully. Much the same thing may be said of any book that is essentially factual.

But poetry and fiction are essentially subjective, emotional, and belong to the realm of art, which the reviewer should always enter respectfully and prayerfully, if not even a little timidly. Novels are about people and there are no rules about either novels or people, at least no fixed rules recognized by the Bureau of Standards in Washington. In the short story, for example, with which I have some familiarity, many attempts have been made to formulate regulations, from Poe to the present, but someone always comes along who has not read the rules and produces a good story of a new variety. (Then the critics set to work at once revising the regulations.)

Hence judging the short story and the novel can only be done satisfactorily by a kind of trained instinct, if there is such a thing, and I am sure there is. As for the novel, the form itself is by now some 300 years old, if we take "Don Quixote" as the starting point, and there have never been any accepted rules, except those made of the best elastic. This is why when you read, as you are sure to, that the novel is dying, which someone remarks at intervals with a kind of determined stupidity, you need have no concern over its demise and may save your tears for some better purpose.

In order for anything to "die," we must first know what it is, and nobody knows what the novel is because it is so many things at once, so perfectly protean. Here are some of the things it is at present, in the words of David Daiches, a sound critic: "It is some time since the novel began to usurp the functions of the medieval romance, the seventeenth-century sermon, the eighteenth-century essay, the nineteenth-century treatise, and to play more parts besides." So the novel changes, but does not die, cannot die.

What we look for in poetry and fic-



"I just had to see you, Mary."

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EDMUND WILSON says of The CHRISTMAS TREE

"Isabel Bolton's second book seems to me even more remarkable than DO I WAKE OR SLEEP. What is exceptional is the boldness and simplicity with which she tackles the great public forces as well as the hidden currents of feeling of the time. She is not merely a clever woman writer who exploits the feminine sensibility vibrating on the edge of contemporary life. She is a poet of the nobler kind who uses the compression and the polish of her fiction to focus human insight and to concentrate moral passion."

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tion—both of them, remember, art, if they are any good—is for them to do something to us, arouse us emotionally, raise or lower our blood pressure. It is well to bear in mind the happy fact—happy, certainly, for many writers and publishers—that readers' boiling points vary widely. Very bad novels stir some readers, or so many of them would not be published every season, and it takes very good novels to make any impression upon a select minority.

The reviewer who has in a single season met a Noble Prostitute in a dozen novels, inevitably begins to be bored with the stereotype and to complain about it, while the inexperienced reader, who has never before heard of such a person, may quite well be deeply moved by the novelty of the portrait. The Hero and the Heroine who are pin-ups for beauty, and as intelligent as they are good-looking, continue to raise multitudes of male and female blood-pressures because sex is a matter of universal interest, but the jaded reviewer at once recognizes these two puppets for what they are, and remains unmoved as they make their sure way over the usual obstacles to the accustomed kiss fade-out and the nuptial couch.

No matter what the book, however, the very first question the reviewer should ask himself is: Is this really interesting? Did I read it with pleasure, or better still, with a feeling of both pleasure and profit? Was I happy in the presence of the author's mind because it seemed acute, brilliant, penetrating, or vice versa? And does the book, if interesting at all, appeal to me merely because it touches some hidden spring in my own bosom, or does it seem to have broader values?

THEN, having answered all these questions, and any others that may have occurred to him, the reviewer must sit down to present in organized fashion his impressions and his judgments. He does this aware that he will be guilty of a certain amount of rationalization, because he is writing of his essentially emotional reactions. (The reactions begin in the emotions and must then move through the intellect, like all other forms of expression. These twin sources of what we say we think account for most of the confusion that exists—that has always existed—in all types of writing.)

Naturally, this putative reviewer should free himself as much as he can from personal bias both in his emotional reactions and his intellectual judgments. In this connection, we must keep in mind that nobody ever wrote a review which was entirely objective, and even if complete objectivity were possible, one may gravely question its desirability in a world of human beings.

No discussion of book reviewing would approach completeness without a mention of log-rolling, or back-scratching, a very old custom among writers—at least as old as writing—which continues to manifest itself in the best of well-regulated literary journals. It is log-rolling that helps to prevent most poets and novelists, not to mention other classes of writers, from being very good book reviewers, even if they have any critical ability, which many have not. The novelist, being human, is quite likely to look with favor, not to say enthusiasm, upon the latest work of his fellow novelist, Jones, because he knows that within a few months Jones, if he has any common decency, will do as much for him. The general attitude in matters of this kind was defined once and for all in the immortal words of Eugene Field, with which he ended a letter to a prospective patron: "In eager expectation of favors to come."

But nobody, obviously, has the right to do biased or dishonest reviewing, any more than anybody has the right to steal or to lie. This kind of dishonesty, no matter what its degree, is a disservice to everyone connected with writing. The person who has been sent posthaste to a bookstore by an over-enthusiastic review, there to spend his hard-earned money for the book in question, quickly becomes bookstore-shy, a chronic ailment, apparently endemic, of Americans, which certainly needs no encouragement from anyone belonging to the writing profession. We writers really cannot afford to frighten away even one customer, and this applies to the best of times, not merely to the present, when the disease mentioned in the foregoing sentence is virulent in form and in an acute stage.

Are there any ways to get into book reviewing besides the tedious one of writing several books yourself, or of making a reputation as a pastry-cook, prizefighter, gangster, or authority on Plato? Your local newspaper, if it has a book page, may be willing to let you write about a book occasionally, allowing you to keep the book as compensation. Then there is the spoken review, which your local club or library may be willing to have you do, and if you are good at it, both sound and entertaining, especially the latter, someone in the club may be willing to pay you to do the reviews for her to read. Radio reviews are done by people of reputation, so here again you can only realize your ambition by first becoming famous for something.

In closing, I should like to empha-

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size that the good review has to be a good piece of writing by any standards. It must be organized, must have the usual beginning, middle, and end, must be clear and logical. It must start somewhere and arrive somewhere else, if I make my meaning plain. The reader should know what you think about the book, which means, to repeat myself once more for emphasis, that you must first know what you think about the book.

If the review is of a novel, you may or may not summarize the plot, which is the easiest way out, depending upon the importance of the action and the element of suspense. Obviously, the very worst kind of review of a detective novel would be one that told the story to the very end. Many serious novels of the present day are not in much danger of this kind of bad reviewing, because they have no story.

Reviews of any kind should be well written, concise, direct, and neither wishy-washy nor woolly. Many current reviews of novels written by women, and some written by men, are wishy-washy and woolly because the reviewer does not really know what to say and is bluffing for the sake of his pitiful cent a word, or maybe even two cents, in exceptional cases. If the review can be entertaining of itself, witty, epigrammatic, and quotable at dinner tables, which is perfectly possible, everybody will be pleased. But no honest reviewer ever uses somebody's hard-written book as a springboard from which to show off his own mastery of ground and lofty literary tumbling. This is selfish, if not downright wicked, one of the seven deadly sins of book reviewing.

And remember that the writer who does a first-rate review not only pleases himself and his wife, but also renders a service to everyone connected with the business of writing and publishing, a business which many of us consider the most important of all the businesses. It is hard work to write good reviews, no matter how much practice you may have, but worth every bit of the effort that goes into the job.

My last words are, "The richer the mind, the richer the review," no matter what the subject of the book. The more you know, the more you think, the better you are going to write, and the more you are going to have to say.

Read, think, write, read, think, write. . . . This is the nearest thing to a magic formula for book reviewing that exists. As I said earlier, it also applies to every other form of writing.

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for Political
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by

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Seeing Things

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MOVIE shorts are an old story. They are as common as goldenrod, or as slacks on the wrong females. But short motion pictures which are self-reliant films instead of fillers; short motion pictures which are neither cartoons nor newsreels; short motion pictures which are unconcerned with fashion, facts, or food and which are not travelogues or propaganda, these are quite another matter. They belong to what Darwin would have had to salute as a different species. Familiar as this species may be in the theatre as the one-act play, or in fiction as the short story, on the screen it is innovational.

"Quartet"* makes this clear. It is a British-produced bill of four short movies made from four of Somerset Maugham's short stories. These stories ("The Facts of Life," "The Alien Corn," "The Kite," and "The Colonel's Lady") are left as unconnected as they would be in book form. When filmed, they invite moviegoers to enjoy for an evening those desultory pleasures well known to readers at home with a volume of short stories in their hands. The audience is asked to make the same quick shifts in mood. It is required to adjust itself with identical swiftness to new characters, new settings, and new plots. In no time it discovers that these transitions can be as effortless and agreeable in a motion-picture theatre as in a library.

Mr. Maugham, looking somewhat posthumous, is on hand to speak the preface. His physical presence is enough to persuade the non-literary no less than the literate that culture of a kind is on tap. Moreover, each yarn is introduced, first, by being seen in book form and, then, by having its introductory lines read from a photograph of the printed page. Reaching for a tome in a bookcase, though an ancient device for introducing classics to the screen, remains a warning to bobby-soxers that they had better make their brows higher and their stockings longer.

The real, the rewarding virtues of "Quartet," however, have nothing to do with such cultural shenanigans. They are implicit in the tone and quality of the scenarios R. C. Sherriff has prepared and the exceptionally sophisticated manner in which these scenarios are acted and directed.

The playlets, more accurately the filmlets, in "Quartet" may not be profound. Their slickness may exceed their depth. They may disclose that arbitrary singleness of purpose to which the short story is heir. They may be based upon what is no more than an incident or turn upon a trick. Yet each and every one of them can claim welcome merits which are the more welcome because they are so seldom found in films. Among these count the surprising fact that, for once, a motion-picture audience is treated as if it were not a motion-picture audience.

Maugham, the superior technician, is allowed to have his own say as a writer without having his technique blurred or altered. Instead of finding his work adapted to the camera, the camera adapts itself to his work. His speeches remain unsimplified, his stories unpurified. They are neither prettied up nor toned down. Their wit, their worldliness, their unblinking awareness of lower- and upper-middle-class mores and morals, their sophistication, even their cynicism—all these are preserved.

In short, "Quartet" is based upon the novel assumption that a person does not cease to know what he knows about life, language, art, sex, or literature merely because he has purchased a ticket to a movie theatre. The characters encountered in these short films continue to behave not only as they would in life but as they did in Mr. Maugham's pages. They do not suffer that celluloid-change beside which the sea-change noted by Ariel must be dismissed as the most minor of alterations.

It is no new discovery to point out how much subtler are the better foreign films than are all but the very best of their American counterparts. Or, for that matter, how much closer they are not only to reality but to its small and recognizable details. To admit that the Hollywood touch can be heavy, vulgar, and bruising is not to be unpatriotic. It is simply to repeat a truth true enough to have become a bromide. One reason, I suspect, for falling box-office receipts is that both humanly and intellectually the kiss of death is upon so many of our sun-kissed films. Certainly, as even Colonel McCormick must admit to himself, the best British movies can boast distinctions, reticences, and performances which few of our native products equal.

—"The Colonel's Lady" from "Quartet."

"Maugham's speeches remain unsimplified, his stories unpurified."

These very qualities, sensational because they are so unsensational, are what recommend Maugham's four short films to anyone in search of civilized diversion. If they represent a level of entertainment far higher than the movies customarily provide, in all fairness to the screen it should be added that these same short films achieve an echelon of excellence outranking that which playgoers knew in such bills of one-acts as Mr. Coward's "Tonight at 8:30."

In their day Mr. Coward's playlets were briskly enjoyable. That they were manifestations of an exceptional theatre talent, no one could deny. Their verve was contagious; their bounce and brittleness widely, and properly, admired. Yet even when they were new, and very much in fashion, part of their sheen came from their being actors' plays. By intention and in execution they were at once vaudevilles and vehicles. Although, as such, they were deftly constructed, their major truths, like their major pleasures, were pure theatre.

The short films derived from Mr. Maugham's stories are richer in their texture. They too are contrived, as contrived they must be. But at their

*QUARTET, four short stories ("The Facts of Life," "The Alien Corn," "The Kite," and "The Colonel's Lady") by W. Somerset Maugham, written for the screen by R. C. Sherriff. Directed, in order, by Ralph Smart, Harold French, Arthur Crabtree, and Ken Annakin. Produced by Antony Darnborough. A Sydney Box Production for Gainsborough. Released in the United States by Eagle-Lion. With casts including Basil Radford, Jack Watling, Mai Zetterling; Dirk Bogarde, Raymond Lovell, Irene Browne, Francoise Rosay; George Cole, Hermione Baddeley, Mervyn Johns, Susan Shaw; Cecil Parker, Nora Swinburne, Linden Travers, Felix Aylmer, Ernest Thesiger, etc. At the Sutton Theatre, New York.

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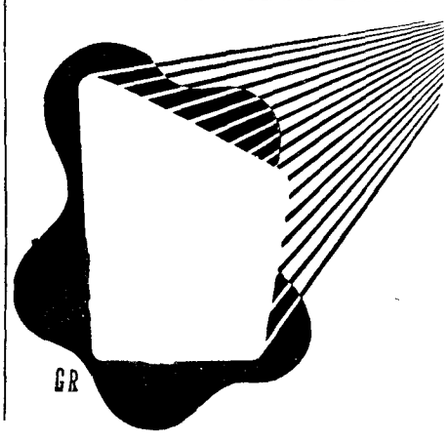
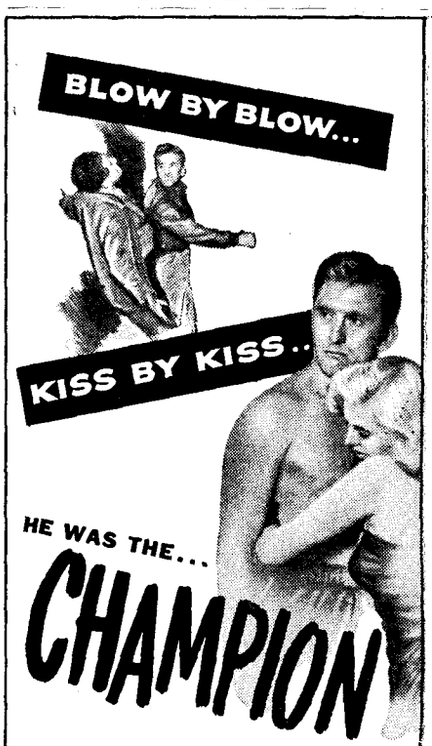
best Mr. Maugham's characters cast shadows. Unlike Mr. Coward's in his one-acts, they are illuminated by other lights than footlights or Klieg lights. They are men and women seen through eyes that are truly seeing. They are observed shrewdly, knowingly, amusingly. The rouge is never laid on too thick, or the mascara allowed to show. Moreover, due to the sensitivity and skill of R. C. Sherriff's scenarios, the illusion is there, winning and complete, not only of seeing agreeably adult films but of hearing agreeably adult short stories read aloud.

The slightest and least interesting of the four is "The Facts of Life," which tells how a young man unwittingly outwits an adventuress who thought she had outwitted him. But all are pleasantly engrossing, whether dealing with a rich boy whose hope was to be a great pianist, the marriage of the strange kite-flier who loves his mother and his kites better than his wife, or the discomforts of a Colonel Blimp when he discovers his wife has written a best-selling poem. Indeed this last one, "The Colonel's Lady," is so delightful that in itself it would more than justify the entire bill.

Although all of these short films are blessed with the same quiet and informed values, each of them is the work of a different director. The actors appearing in them may be familiar to English audiences, but to American moviegoers most of them are unknown. The fact that we see them without bothering about who they are as players means only that we are the more inclined to believe in them as characters. Their skill, individually and collectively, is of a very high order. Their playing is of that polished, truthful kind which we have come to expect in the better English films. It has none of the emptiness, the shallowness, the commonness, or the movie-magazine exhibitionism that can be the bane of Hollywood acting. Whether humorous or tense, whether portraying upper or lower classes, it is informed and perceptive and seems basted in the juices of life.

—JOHN MASON BROWN.





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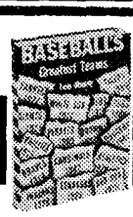

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FICTION

(*Continued from page 14*)

Mr. Williams depends so much on Freudian insights, he still prefers, as he says, the "Know Love" of the Christian to the "Know thyself" of the Greek—though he admits the necessity of both. He charges that modern knowledge by probing into the springs of personality has brought us nearer to the grave and its uneasy tenants. But it would seem that such knowledge—the death-wish, presumably—brings us no nearer, but rather sets off more precisely the distance to our inevitable goal.

This brief, superficial review of a remarkable novel can only hint at its richness. The ideas are fresh and resonant, and they are set forth in prose that is often poetry, and that is shot through with allusiveness and allusions (ranging from Dante to Shelley). It is a novel that requires rereading, that penetrates deeply into the worlds of the imagination with the wisdom, even with something of the inspired frenzy of the true poet.

Robert Halsband, who teaches English at Hunter College, is the editor of Lady Mary Montagu's "Nonsense of Common-Sense, 1737-1738."

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Big Time Crime

CRY TOUGH! By Irving Shulman. New York: The Dial Press. 1949. 352 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by EDMUND FULLER

"CRY tough, and let slip the dogs of gangsterism" I take to be the idea of this title; an invention of dubious motive. The present novel is a sequel to Mr. Shulman's "The Amboy Dukes," published a few years ago. It picks up the thread at the time when Mitchell Wolf, the central figure, is released from Elmira Reformatory after doing two years for the grim juvenile gangsterism of the previous book. Now about nineteen years old, he is calmly ready to settle down to an all-out, adult career of criminality. That, at least, is the upshot of his course, whether or not we are to consider that there is any serious vacillation about this purpose.

Mitch's first act is to precipitate a family crisis by his violent reaction upon discovering that his sister's boyfriend is a cop. After some aimless floundering he consents to his father's wish to get him apprenticed to a cutter in the women's dress field. He goes to work, accordingly, with excellent prospects, in the shop of one Sam Rappaport, of whom it is aptly said, "With him for a friend, a man doesn't need any enemies." Sam takes a liking to him and lets him do a little "protecting" on his trips to a non-union shop maintained in Red Bank, New Jersey.

Through this association he meets the reigning king of Brownsville gangsterism, Itzik Yanowitz, a soft-spoken, effective individual who blends murderous ruthlessness with sentimental paternalism. Mitch becomes a kind of protégé of Itzik. In association with two of his former cronies from the old Dukes, Larry Tunafish and Bull Bronstein, he does roughing-up jobs for one of Itzik's lieutenants until at last, in the long-anticipated reward for faithful service, they are permitted to work directly for Itzik and are sent to the West Coast on an ambitious mission.

In the course of this chronicle there is enough blood, violence, sordidness, and filth to pave Brownsville's Pitkin Avenue. The documentary accuracy of this I do not doubt. Nor do I question the genuineness of Mr. Shulman's indignation, or the importance of such an exposé. The trouble is that it has been done quite a number of times now, including once by Mr. Shulman himself. Nothing new in insight or interpretation is added.

Mitch's love story is of the neo-romantic "boy meets whore" genre. For a while he gnaws at his heart over the fact that anybody can buy the beautiful Joyce who can command her high price. But by the time he has got her away, with Itzik's blessing, from the big-time pimp Winnie Dobby, he has made a satisfactory adjustment to her prior career—he may even miss it.

The ending suggests a temporary adjournment for continuation of Mitch's progress in a California locale. Authors must go their own ways, but Mr. Shulman should consider the possibility that the tough school is now bankrupt. He should think of turning his indignation and his skill of observation into less well-worked grooves.

There was a distinct function to be performed in studying the gang phenomena of the Thirties and Forties. "Scarface" and "Little Caesar" were definitive of the Twenties. The youthful gangsterism developed in the Thirties had its own peculiar qualities. Willard Motley covered it for the Chicago scene in "Knock on Any Door." Brownsville, in Brooklyn, however, seems to be the archtype of the contemporary gang-breeding environment, and a number of writers have emerged from its morass to write of it. I believe that David Dortort's "Burial of the Fruit," published shortly before "The Amboy Dukes," is incomparably the best treatment of this theme. It has a focus and concentration that Motley lacks, and, more important, a literary beauty, an artistic insight, and a poetic fury altogether lacking, yet urgently needed, in Shulman's ploddingly literal chronicle. Motley and Dortort, between them, have wrapped up this package.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Proteus, in "Two Gentlemen from Verona." 2. Katharina, in "The Taming of the Shrew." 3. Montague, in "Romeo and Juliet." 4. Desdemona, in "Othello." 5. Cressida, in "Troilus and Cressida." 6. Rosalind, in "As You Like It." 7. Isabella, in "Measure for Measure." 8. Duncan, in "Macbeth." 9. "Richard III." 10. Earl of Gloucester, in "King Lear." 11. Hermia, in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." 12. Alonso, in "The Tempest." 13. "Hamlet." 14. "Cymbeline." 15. Leonato, in "Much Ado About Nothing." 16. Shylock, in "The Merchant of Venice." 17. "Richard II." 18. "Henry IV."

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Spiritual Career

JEAN BAROIS. By Roger Martin du Gard. Translated by Stuart Gilbert. New York: The Viking Press. 1949. 365 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by MORRIS BISHOP

WHY should a publisher pick up a thirty-six-year-old novel for translation? Obviously because he thinks it has a meaning above time, it lives, amid the universal death of little books. Our publisher is certainly right. "Jean Barois" is an important book, a revealing record of a period of crucial change, a timeless examination of the human spirit.

It is a drama on three levels, like the "Divine Comedy," like "Faust." On the lowest level it is the story of Jean Barois, born in 1866, brought up in a devout Catholic atmosphere, ardent, with mystical tendencies. He goes to Paris to study medicine, finds in science a new revelation, and is forced, by anguished logic, to renounce his faith, and, ere long, to leave his grimly pious wife. He becomes a leader of the affirmative freethinkers, who made humanity their god, holy reason their guide and comfort. "A human life is not 'empty of concern,' it is neither a meaningless ordeal nor a quest for individual happiness. Everything I do shares in the great forward movement of the universe." Jean Barois is editor of a rationalist magazine; he takes a leading part in the vindication of Dreyfus. And then, aging, shaken, and fearful, concluding that all his effort has done no more than stir about changeless evil, he loses his faith in reason, makes his confession, and dies.

On the second level the book is a picture of France before, during, and after the *Affaire*. One would be hard put to it to find a better statement of the intellectual conflicts of those days and their representation in politics and social life. The hundred-page description of the Dreyfus case, which includes part of the stenographic report of Zola's trial, is wonderfully thrilling. (When will some good playwright recognize that this, one of the greatest historical dramas of all times, provides him with a noble theme and characters, and most of his dialogue?)

And on the top level "Jean Barois" is the old philosophical tragedy of man's search for certitude. Jean Barois says to his wife: "I can't prevent my ideas being alive, evolving. It's not up to me to govern them; it's they that must rule my life." These Frenchmen accept without question that ideas must rule life; hence their

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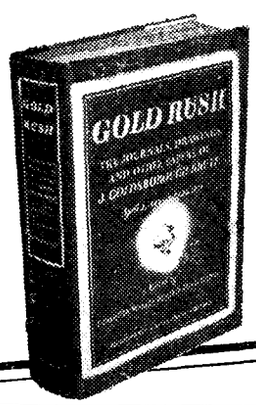

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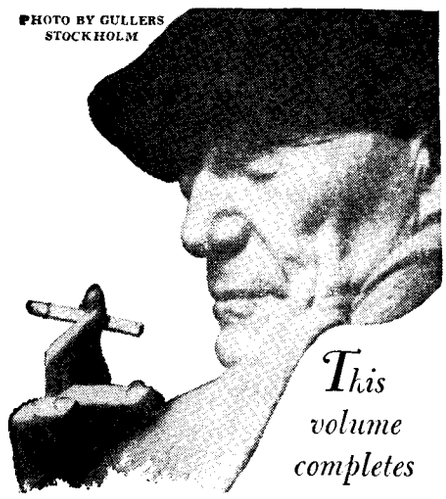
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anguish when ideas play them false. For eventually ideas fail. Barois, approaching disillusion, says to a young man: "Sometimes one wonders if, on a long view, any new order is really better than the old one. All these things are so relative—how can one help contradicting oneself? When a man is honest and when, year after year, he has acquired a solid apprehension of realities, it's impossible for him to be merely logical." A recurring symbol of the story is Michelangelo's "Fettered Slave," which stands always on the hero's desk, forever struggling to raise his arm, and in vain. Helpless, he must give place, in the end, to the crucifix.

Despite its conclusion, the book is not to be recommended for the edification of the faithful. Martin du Gard is painfully fair. The arguments of the rationalists, as arguments, are still valid; they may well trouble tender pietists. Jean Barois' final conversion is determined mostly by fear and lassitude. This feature has offended some critics; but the point is that the author intends not to argue right and wrong, but to show us the spiritual career of a superior individual who is yet typical of his times.

The translation, by Stuart Gilbert, is thoroughly excellent. Let us be grateful to the competent translator, the forgotten man of literature.

Morris Bishop, professor of romance languages at Cornell University, is author of "Pascal, the Life of Genius."

Difficult Relations of Humankind

THE SLENDER REED. By H. H. Lynde. New York: Crown Publishers. 1949. 312 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by
MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS

A FINE novel is so much greater than the sum of all its parts, its action, its setting, its character, its style. Like this one.

To tell its story would be to give no idea at all of the satisfactions in it, the tale, merely, of a meek wife and inconspicuous mother who after years of silent protest against the terms imposed upon her life by the people closest to her, not too intelligent, not energetic, proves the depths of her character in a triumph of wisdom that is the greater for the slow years of its development.

You could say of its setting, the big Victorian house on the quiet square with the garden and the little bronze elephant and the other houses of aging families around it, that it was so well presented that it is as if you had lived there yourself, among the imperceptible changes of the years.

—*Paul De Gaston.*

H. H. Lynde—"an instinctive feeling for recognizable reality."

Or you could speak of the characters so quietly presented, so completely real, so subtly understood, who filled Madge Fairlie's life as so many women's lives have been crammed full; the dominant, exasperating husband, the headstrong, maladjusted daughter and her passion for the young husband whom she would love and misunderstand and nearly ruin, the poverty-stricken executive sister, even the starving gentle Delavans from across the square named for them. You could say the book is fine because it shows so clearly that difficult relation and interrelation of humankind, that never seems to begin or to leave off, the web that connects all men and women whatsoever, strong and hidden and cruel and beautiful.

If you are of the kind to notice style you could speak of the way this book is written, quietly, with the details all flowing together in time, years going by as years do, stretching out in words here interminably sometimes and with the deep emotion biding timeless in them. Or events and actions crowding suddenly and inevitably, the result of thoughts and acts and human pressures slowly piling up.

You would still, if you like this quiet book and the people, and the woman who centers it like some well-loved friend, be unable to express the quality it has, rich with fine rhythms and understanding. It is the quality that some of the great books of family relations have, "The Forsyte Saga" and "The Old Wives' Tale." It is not written on such a breadth of canvas. But it is built with that same sure-

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ness of pitch, an instinctive feeling for recognizable reality.

More than all that, it seems exceptionally pleasant, with a deep underlying lift of satisfaction, to read again about a character which is allowed somehow to triumph. Writers of many modern novels of failure and of doom forget that we are still human, we readers of stories. Once in a while, when a victory of the spirit is so convincing and inevitable as this, we find a sense of lift in it far beyond the famous purges of pity and terror. Because it is still true that once in a while the human spirit does triumph. And then, so do we all.

Dream Girl

LOLA: A Love Story. By Philip Van Doren Stern. New York: Rinehart & Co. 1949. 278 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by HERSCHEL BRICKELL

THIS is a fictional approach, and not a notably successful one, to the explanation of what made a woman wonderfully glamorous, so glamorous that starting from humble circumstances she became the toast of Europe, a king's mistress, and then a well-known character in our own early West.

The facts of Lola Montez's career have been dealt with before, and they are truly remarkable. Mr. Stern tries to bring her alive as she appeared to a youthful Bostonian who became one of her many lovers, and, through the lover's relation of the romance, to make her appear as the woman of every man's dreams.

The task is not an easy one for a novelist, since the glamor of woman is an elusive quality at best, and neither to be accounted for by beauty of person or achievements. So whether or not Lola was one of the reincarnations of Maya, or merely a highly successful adventuress, remains a question unanswered at the end of the book.

The other problem, that of making the young Bostonian a credible and sympathetic figure, is basic, and here again Mr. Stern's considerable experience as a novelist has not served him well enough, for John Carter Hale strikes this reviewer as singularly easy to forget among the characters of current fiction.

What we have is a short novel that presents Lola as a brave woman of liberal ideas besides being very good looking and amorous, but which leaves both the period and the principal figures too vaguely realized to be a literary achievement of any note. One suspects Lola deserves better.

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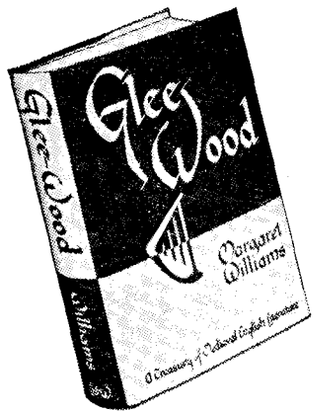

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Ours is rotten: we didn't even know why Margaret Williams called her Treasury of Middle English Literature

GLEE-WOOD*

so ignorant are we. This is a book of the best stuff, poetry and prose, written between the Norman conquest and the Elizabethans. She has put it into modern English (an almost miraculously good job, we are told) keeping the metre of the poetry, the spirit of everything, and adding a running commentary on the background of her selections, linking each with the next. The book covers as wide a range of subjects as anyone could wish, with a gratifying amount of more or less natural history:

Cathegrande is a fish
The greatest that in water is

the beginning of a description of a whale, is a fair sample, and like much else in the book a hazard if you read it more than once—the lines are apt to go round and round in your head and come out unexpectedly to the confusion of your friends. The book has 500 pages, a lot of pictures, costs $6.

If you are one of those rare people (of whom we are so fond) who sometimes actually buy a book of modern poetry, let us turn your attention to FROST FOR ST. BRIGID ($1.75) by Sister Maris Stella. Coming to it after *Glee-Wood*, you will feel no jar: like the middle English poets she writes on anything that takes her fancy, and writes to be enjoyed. We are so wrong, reactionary and generally reprehensible that we still think poetry ought to be enjoyed. (That's why we published Robert Farren's HOW TO ENJOY POETRY ($3): it may not make converts of inveterate poetry-haters, but as a range-of-poetry-enjoyment-increaser it is superb. Didn't you think so?)

□—□—□

We publish a review called Sheed & Ward's OWN TRUMPET every two or three months: reviews of new books, extracts from books to come, poetry, pictures, etc. We send it free to anyone who asks for it in the hope that it may lead them to wander into a bookshop sometime. If you don't mind the risk and would like to see a copy, send a card to Elizabeth McGill.

SHEED & WARD
NEW YORK 3

*It means harp.

the Phoenix Nest

NOBODY likes to be misrepresented. I have recently been misrepresented in the illustrated weekly *Life*, one of the Henry R. Luce publications, and in justice to myself and my friends, correspondents, and contributors, I wish here to make a statement of fact. Exactly what the magazine *Life* thought to accomplish by printing in its issue of April 4, 1949, a double-spread of small photographs, headed in large capitals, "Dupes and Fellow-Travelers Dress up Communist Fronts," I do not know. Among those pictured were Albert Einstein; Thomas Mann; Vida D. Scudder; Arthur Upham Pope; Ralph Barton Perry; Guy Emery Shipler of *The Churchman*; F. O. Matthiessen, the brilliant critic at Harvard; Harlow Shapley, the eminent astronomer; Mark Van Doren (whom I am delighted to claim as a particular friend); Aaron Copland, the distinguished musician; Louis Untermeyer (one of my oldest poet friends); Lillian Hellman and Arthur Miller (two of our most outstanding playwrights, one older and one younger, to say nothing of Clifford Odets); Dorothy Parker and Donald Ogden Stewart (well-known American satirists), and yours sincerely among others.

Now I do not know the political, economic, or sociological beliefs of most of the people pictured. I know their work in science and the arts. I know of what value it has been in the various branches. The three playwrights alone have contributed valuably to American drama. A scholar and poet like Mark Van Doren is of more value to his country than any number of snappy journalists. His greatest outside interest at present is, by the way, world federalism (anathema to Communism). I do not know how many of those pictured may be Communists or sympathetic with Communism, but I *do* know that they have all been singled out for public rebuke by a widely-circulated medium, and that the average person will henceforth think of them *all* as fellow-travelers, if not as actual Party members. Some of the particular photographs seem to have been selected in order to make individuals look as sappy or as menacing as possible. That side of it is fairly amusing!

However, the overall aspect of this kind of sensationalism is not amusing in the least. In my own case, the misrepresentation has been so gross that it led to a thoughtful and pleasant inquiry from an old acquaintance of mine, Francis Biddle, recently Attorney General of the United States. He wondered what my reasons might have been for attending the recent Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace, for he very naturally inferred that all those pictured had been prime movers in the conference or at least present at the Waldorf-Astoria. I *might* have had a reason. I might have gone to hear Norman Cousins, *SRL*'s editor, make his courageous and forthright speech. But the fact is that, as my wife and I left New York on February 19 and did not return to the city from California until April 6, I could by no stretch of the imagination have been physically present. Neither was I present in spirit, for I did not feel that the conference could accomplish anything truly constructive in the way of bringing about world peace. On the other hand, in the interests of the free expression of opinion, I felt that it was perfectly proper to hold it, and that those who picketed it merely placed themselves in exactly the same category as the Communists who picketed Churchill.

My readers know by this time my precise opinions concerning the evolution from revolution of Soviet Russia, and also my precise opinions concerning Communism. In a letter to the editors of *Life* (which, in the event of its being published, cannot possibly reach as many people as those who look merely at pictures) I enclosed in this connection several issues of the PHOENIX NEST with which my readers are familiar. But I also said that I was proud to have my ugly mug appear on the same double-spread with the visages of Einstein, Mann, Perry, etc., and that I did not repudiate my friends, however much I might repudiate an ideology which I regard as false and dangerous.

My past history in liberal organizations, some of which appeared later to be taken over by Communists, is that I was one of the charter members of the Independent Citizens' Committee at the time we helped elect Franklin D. Roosevelt to one of his many terms of office, that I continued with that organization even after it became the Progressive Citizens of America, until it came out against the Marshall Plan and for Henry A. Wallace, whose attitude toward Russia seemed to me to go right along with the Communist Party line. I was a hopeful member of the Council for

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American-Soviet Friendship (as I was friendly to Russia all through the war, along with the rest of my country) until they sent me of late a statement on Czechoslovakia which I felt might as well have come direct from Moscow. In both instances I sent in my resignation promptly and some time ago. I now belong to the Americans for Democratic Action.

I have always been opposed to Franco and Franco's Spain; and always, as an independent and a member of no party, I have taken the same attitude in regard to Republican Spain that I once heard expressed by our recent Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson: namely that we should originally have lifted the arms embargo and declared ourselves against the Fascists who jumped Spain before the Second World War broke. In that connection, I herewith ask you to note the "Exclusive Pictures of Franco Spain" in the same issue of *Life* of which I speak, and also that a complete collection of facsimile reproductions of the *Volunteer for Liberty* has now been published in a limited edition by the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. It is an historical record, representing a complete file of the publication of the official organ of the English-speaking battalions of the International Brigades which fought for the Republic during Spain's war for independence, 1936-39.

I do not fear Communism in this country. But obvious efforts to intimidate free thought and expression have driven me lately to conclude that that sort of thing is a real and present danger in the United States of America. A widely circulated and influential journal has, at very least, chosen to play into the hands of the intimidators. I admire the ingenious phrasing of certain text that I have recently read, for it quite cleverly cuts the ground from under any charge of libel. Meanwhile a sort of intellectual rogues' gallery is established in the public mind, for a glance, a snicker, or a curse. Good, clean, American fair play! Isn't it?

—William Rose Benét.

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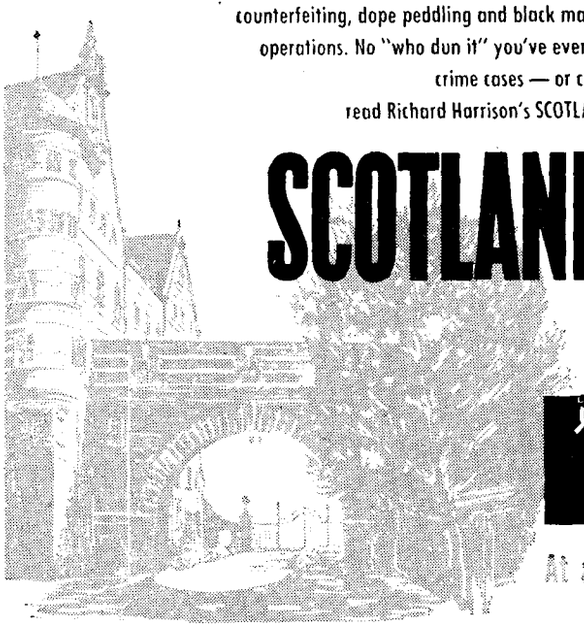

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THE AUTHOR
Dr. R. E. Lapp is an American scientist who helped develop the atom bomb. A key physicist with the Manhattan Project and scientific adviser at Bikini, he was also technical adviser on atomic energy to the U. S. Military Establishment.

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BEETHOVEN, 9th Symph. (Phila., Ormandy), Leonore #3 (Philharmonia, Kletzki) SL-50 (2); Quartet op. 131 (Budapest) ML 4106; "Ghost" Trio op. 70 (Busch-Serkin) ML 4128. MAHLER, Songs of a Wayfarer; BACH, Sacred Arias (Carol Brice) ML 4108. PROKOFIEFF, Classical Symph. RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF, Russian Easter Ov. (Phila., Ormandy) ML 2035. HANDEL, The Messiah (Liverpool Philh., Huddersfield Chor., Isobel Baillie, etc.) SL-51 (3). MUSSORGSKY, Scenes from "Boris Godounov" (Pinza, Met. Opera Orch., Cho.) ML 4115. DVORAK, Symph. #4 (N. Y. Philh., Walter) ML 4119. SAINT-SAENS, Symph. #3 with organ (N. Y. Philh., Munch) ML 4120. TCHAIKOVSKY, Serenade in C (Phila., Ormandy); Theme and Vars. from Suite #3 (N. Y. Philh., Barbirolli) ML 4121. CHOPIN, Mazurkas (Maryla Jonas) ML 2036.		Columbia systematically continues reissuing its library on LP. Many older sets are much improved on LP due to new copying methods. Some older sets are combined with newly released material.

TCHAIKOVSKY

TCHAIKOVSKY: SYMPHONY #3 ("POLISH"). Royal Philharmonic, Beecham. RCA Victor DM 1279 (5)	Two similar recordings, one from Europe via RCA Victor, the other in the rather European style Columbia affects; both are excellent. The Col. is heavier bottomed, the British one somewhat more brilliant, lighter—surprisingly. I'd say Columbia has the sharper, cleaner highs, especially in loud parts.	Two powerhouse works for those who want Tchaikovsky in less familiar form. Critics disagree—I find the "Polish" a skilful piece with all the standard T. effects but on the super-showmanship side; "Francesca," not unlike "R. & Juliet," is deeper, more striking in tragic moments than much Tchaikovsky. Beecham is a bit sedate in his playing; Stoky, to my ear, is good.
TCHAIKOVSKY: FRANCESCA DA RIMINI. N. Y. Philharmonic, Stokowski. Columbia MM 806 (3) *LP*: ML 4071 (½)		

OPERA SLICES

GABRIELLA GATTI in arias from Monteverdi's "Arianna," Weber's "Oberon," Verdi's "Un Ballo." Anon. orch., Simonetto. Cetra-Soria 112 (2)	A fine, light sound, the orchestra enveloping the voice most beautifully. Highs present but unstrident, the voice perfectly recorded. Quite a hiss, very smooth.	A superb voice; the Weber and Verdi items are beautifully, smoothly presented. So is the Monteverdi—with an orchestral monstrosity of accompaniment in ersatz-Wagner style.
VERDI: DUETS. (Five, from four operas.) Ilitsch, Baum, Tucker; Cho. & Orch. Met. Opera, Rudolph. Columbia MM 798 (4)	Voices are at seeming stage-distance but there is still a very high level, with some harshness in voices. Orch. does not "envelope" as well as in Italian recording above. Better highs.	An improbable but useful album—duets aren't often so recorded. Ilitsch is top star, Baum & Tucker attendants—but not as subservient as Traubel's duet partners. Well-integrated performances.
WEBER: DER FREISCHUTZ, RECIT. AND ARIA, ACT II. Ljuba Welitsch; Philharmonia Orch., Susskind. Columbia 72777-D (1) 3-102 (17" mg)	I have microgroove version—good orch. sound, but voice is slightly fuzzy throughout. Better try both standard and microgroove versions; might be a difference.	Another stunning voice, smooth, beautifully colored, and alive, in a superb piece of lyric and dramatic music. Her accuracy of pitch is a delight.
BJOERLING singing Favorite Operatic Arias. (Bohème, Aïda, Carmen, Cav. Rust., Marta, Faust.) RCA Victor MO 1275 (3)	Like all high-power tenors, Bjoerling records with an edge that varies with loudness, and with state of your stylus and amplifier.	For non-opera fans this tenor is fine introduction to Italian-French opera. His pitch is wonderful, he sings expressively, sincerely, simply.

—Edward Tatnall Canby.

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The Film Forum

AFTERMATH OF WAR

***The Saturday Review's* Weekly Guide to Selected 16mm. Sound Films.**

EDITOR'S NOTE: *With Eisenhower's war memoirs still high on the best-seller list (if that means anything these days), and Churchill's new book crowding them for popularity, we pick out this week two films on the war and its aftermath—one a report on the people of Britain, the other the joint allied record of the Normandy invasion and the great sweep into Germany.*

A YANK COMES BACK

Produced by the Crown Film Unit, England, for the Central Office of Information, written and produced by Burgess Meredith. Available from British Information Services, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N. Y. (43 mins.)

In this astonishing film, by Burgess Meredith out of Olsen and Johnson, hell's still a-poppin' from every corner of the screen. "Buzz" Meredith reported on England during the war in a delightful film which swept up Bob Hope in an uproarious episode in a taxi, with the British currency system getting the biggest ribbing of all time.

Now Buzz is back to see what's been happening in England since his GI days. But instead of a peaceful conducted tour (for of course he stars in his own picture), the audience is treated to the biggest dose of cinematic high-jinks since our two famous comedians started hanging from the top of the film frame when the projectionist went haywire.

No one should be surprised when Buzz addresses the screen and finds it answering back in a rich Scots accent; when changes of scene are announced on a studio "take-board" something like the rustics' famous "Wall" in "The Midsummer Night's Dream"; and when the camera, panning away from Jeanne de Casalis in a completely fantastic interview, encounters her all over again, pans away and again picks her up, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Unhappily, the tricks of transition are so many that the film never catches its breath; it becomes itself one immensely long and complicated transition. It is always on the move, and the audience, like Alice in Wonderland, must run as fast as it can merely in order to stand still. Buzz Meredith certainly gets around, pursued by his kilted camera—a camera on two legs. He climbs a gasometer to find at the top a painter who is also a statistician; but his cameraman, clinging perilously to a rail, loses his balance and carries the audience crashing to the ground far below. He interviews some housewives enjoying their traditional grouse as they wait in line outside the butcher's; returning home with one of them, he discovers that, in spite of meat rationing, she still manages to be a wrestling champion, who proceeds to throw him and his ubiquitous camera out the window.

Thus the audience reels and rollicks along from one zany episode to another, in each discovering a long-faced and lugubrious Burgess Meredith dragging facts out of the British people for a movie script he has failed to write by the time he has to pack his bag at the end of the picture. The impression he gets and passes along is unhappily a bit nebulous. This being a Government-sponsored (and therefore non-partisan) film, we aren't let into the secret that Britain is now a Socialized country—though we do see something of state-owned aircraft research, pre-natal clinics, free milk schemes, and other widely shared benefits of the Welfare State.

On the other hand, an audience unfamiliar with this new film language might be pardoned for thinking that most of Britain was on its way to the nut-house—not perhaps a frame of mind to be induced when a ten-per-cent cut in ERP is looming in Congress.

Future historians of the film will rank this one with "Hellzapoppin" rather than with the staid, Gladstonian British documentary film. Maybe this is a healthy sign. For all the virtues of the documentary tradition, it will not hold people's attention unless it can warm their hearts and set them laughing. With "A Yank Comes Back," it and the audience experience the same salutary shaking up.

THE TRUE GLORY

Produced by the combined film units of the Allied High Command. Available from Film Program Services, 1173 Sixth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

This massive and powerfully-wrought film tells the story of the Allied campaign in Europe from the preparations for invasion to the capitulation of Germany. When there is so much talk of another war, it is wholesome to remind ourselves sometimes of what the last one was really like.

Consciously constructed in the style of Hardy's "The Dynasts," the film puts its explanatory passages into blank verse, spoken over finely conceived picture maps which show the grand strategy of attack. The body of the film tells of the soldier's war. It is a tapestry of voices: every variety of American accent and British dialect, Polish, Czech, Canadian, Australian, French—each recounting his own episode in the advance. And through them all weaves the kindly, reassuring voice of Ike Eisenhower.

"Now the time has come," says the narrator near the end, "to put our victory to the test of peace." Four years have passed since those words were written. What have we to show for them?

—RAYMOND SPOTTISWOODE.

For information about the purchase or rental of any films, please write to Film Department, The Saturday Review, 25 West 45th St., New York 19, N. Y.

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IT will be a mixed bag of books this week, thanks to the press of titles deserving attention, but every volume included is heartily recommended, no matter how briefly noted.

First there is "The Portable Charles Lamb" (Viking, $2), edited by John Mason Brown, who has chosen wisely from Lamb's assorted writings, and provided an introduction worthy of the author with whom it deals. Particularly happy was the decision to include so many of Lamb's revealing letters. This volume would prove good reading anywhere, but I happened to enjoy it while overlooking the Pacific, during a week end at Laguna, so it will always be pleasantly associated in my mind with a blue sea and a blue sky and white gulls flying. A companion volume well worth owning is "The Portable Sherwood Anderson," ably edited and introduced by Horace Gregory. Anderson was an uneven writer, particularly in his novels, but his best stories promise to prove durable. Here we have "Poor White" complete, tales from "Winesburg" and other stories, some letters, and a few brief sketches —a sound collection. A line from Lamb might serve as a fit epigraph for these two satisfying Portables and their fellows: "To be strong-backed and neat-bound is the desideratum of a volume. Magnificence comes after."

André Gide's "Dostoievsky" (New Directions, $2.50), first translated in 1925, is small in size but large in content; valuable not only for its insights into the work and nature of Dostoievsky, and for the illuminating remarks on life and literature that are Gide's specialty, but also for what it has to say about the character of the Russian people, particularly their passion for public confession—a passion that long antedates the purge trials which have so puzzled the Western world. Gide may or may not be the great novelist that many think him, but he is surely a brilliant critic of life and letters, and a *moraliste* of the first order.

Homer W. Smith's "Kamongo, or The Lungfish and the Padre" (Viking, $2.50), which has enjoyed a quiet and deserved reputation since its first appearance in 1932, should find many new readers now that it has been reissued. "Kamongo" is a physiologist's statement of his intellectual position in the face of life's mysteries, cast in the form of an engaging and graceful dialogue between the writer and a priest, homeward bound through the Suez Canal. It is the statement of a scientist who is content to accept a universe in which there is *process* but no *purpose*; of a thinker whose speculations regarding evolution and life force are original, fascinating. A fine piece of writing.

There is no room here, even were there the ability, to reappraise the value of Byron's poetry, but a reading of "Don Juan" in the attractive John Lehmann edition ($3.50), and a number of Byron's other works in the new Everyman's complete edition of the "Poems" (Dutton, 3 vols., $1.45 each), convinces me that such a reappraisal is desirable. Byron's reputation soared, then sank; it has risen recently, but not enough. It is high time that a new generation rediscovered "Don Juan," in particular, with its marvelous variety, exuberance, incisive wit, verbal brilliance, and worldly wisdom. And, after "Don Juan," let the discoverers turn to "The Vision of Judgment."

"Twenty-five Modern Plays" (Harper, $4.75), edited by S. Marion Tucker and Alan S. Downer, is the most interesting anthology in its field that I have seen. Beginning with "Rosmersholm," ending with "Command Decision," and working its way through such various dramatists as Gorky, Hauptmann, Benavente, and Karel Capek, it also contains notable experiments by Georg Kaiser, Cocteau, Auden, and Isherwood. Another useful, established Harper anthology is "Typical Elizabethan Plays" ($5), edited by Felix E. Schelling and Matthew W. Black. And those of us who were brought up on The Mermaid Series will welcome the readable reprints of "Ben Jonson," "Congreve," "Webster and Tourneur," and "Marlowe," now issued by A. A. Wyn ($3 each).

H. N. Brailsford's "Voltaire" (Oxford, Home University Library, $2), is the best brief life of Voltaire that I know; although I do not agree with the author's explanation of *l'infame* . . . Oxford is also giving us an "Illustrated Dickens" that should please old and new readers. These handy volumes—of which "Pickwick," "Copperfield," "Bleak House," and "A Tale of Two Cities" ($3.50 each) have appeared—are distinguished by plates remade from the original illustrations.

—BEN RAY REDMAN.

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S. To spoil or commit waste upon (law).	5 135 22 57 63 26 189
T. In trim (4 wds.).	50 44 185 146 97 92 33 121 70 10 75 169
U. A ninny (slang, U. S.; comp.).	80 20 151 125 32 67
V. Acetylene (chem.).	73 3 23 1 113 181
W. Influential English novelist (1689-1761).	153 171 74 188 90 52 12 65 58 64
X. To consider valuable (3 wds.).	19 122 150 88 132 186 100 144 96 184
Y. To defeat, derange, etc.	25 40 82 163 120 173 143 95 6
Z. Tycho's star (2 wds.).	148 24 56 158 61 161 68 123

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).

■	■	■	■	■	■	■	1 V	2 A	■	3 V	4 A	5 S	■	6 Y	7 R	8 B	9 D	10 T
11 N	■	12 W	13 B	14 E	15 A	■	16 M	17 C	18 I	19 X	■	20 U	21 I	■	22 S	23 V
24 Z	■	25 Y	26 S	27 N	28 C	29 P	30 R	31 D	■	32 U	33 T	■	34 B	35 J	36 A	■
37 N	38 P	39 I	40 Y	41 R	42 M	43 C	44 T	45 L	46 G	■	47 R	48 F	49 Q	50 T	51 J	52 W
53 E	54 N	55 K	■	56 Z	57 S	58 W	59 O	60 R	■	61 Z	62 N	63 S	64 W	■	65 W	66 G
67 U	68 Z	69 C	70 T	■	71 P	72 R	73 V	■	74 W	75 T	76 R	77 O	78 D	■	79 P	80 U
■	81 Q	82 Y	83 R	84 F	85 M	86 D	87 H	88 X	89 O	■	90 W	91 H	92 T	93 A	94 R	■
95 Y	96 X	97 T	98 I	99 J	100 X	101 N	■	102 F	103 O	104 C	■	105 Q	106 L	107 C	108 O	109 J
110 P	111 M	■	112 I	113 V	114 P	■	115 Q	116 D	117 C	118 G	119 B	120 Y	121 T	122 X	123 Z	■
124 L	125 U	■	126 E	127 B	128 C	129 O	130 J	131 D	■	132 X	133 M	134 P	135 S	■	136 L	137 F
138 A	139 G	140 I	141 C	142 K	■	143 Y	144 X	145 H	146 T	147 A	148 Z	149 R	■	150 X	151 U	■
152 F	153 W	154 Q	155 H	156 E	157 G	158 Z	159 K	■	160 P	161 Z	162 A	■	163 Y	164 D	165 N	166 Q
167 L	168 O	169 T	■	170 N	171 W	172 D	173 Y	174 L	■	175 C	176 J	177 A	■	178 E	179 Q	180 C
181 V	182 N	183 B	184 X	■	185 T	186 X	■	187 J	188 W	189 S	190 C	■	■	■	■	■

Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 37 of this issue.

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